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# MONTH

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# THE MASHONA AND THE BRITISH

By

CHRISTOPHER DEVLIN

ALTHOUGH the title of this article is "The Mashona and the British," much of it is concerned with the period between the Portuguese withdrawal at the end of the seventeenth century and the arrival of the British at the end of the nineteenth. During this period a people called the Rozvi succeeded the Monomotapa dynasty and exercised a sort of sovereignty over the Mashona with the title of Mambo or King—a title probably taken over from their predecessors, whose designation "Mwene-mutapa" or "Munhu-mutapa" was a praise-name rather than a title.<sup>1</sup> Since the Portuguese records cease to be useful for this period, all the scanty information about the eighteenth century comes from tribal memories which, when checked and cross-checked, are found generally consistent for seven or eight generations back.

Modern historians of Southern Rhodesia, skipping rapidly through the period before the British occupation, assume that there was a wholesale invasion by foreign Rozvi who overthrew the Monomotapa dynasty and occupied his territory by force. The Rozvi tradition is, however, rather different. They claim that they always had a certain authority in Monomotapa's domain since they were a younger branch of the ruling house; that "Mambo Munhu-mutapa" went away east to live with the Portuguese and died there; that most of his former vassals accepted peacefully the new Mambo.

Although Rozvi traditions by themselves are a fantastic palimpsest, yet this particular one does seem to correspond with the facts. The power of the Monomotapa dynasty dwindled to nothing during the first half of the eighteenth century because it had withdrawn into the shadow of the Portuguese estates between Tete and Sena while its former vassals remained in the present territory of Southern Rhodesia. These former vassals,

<sup>1</sup> Dos Santos, the Dominican missionary, wrote in 1586 that "Mambo Monomotapa is friendly to the Portuguese."

however, while they greatly expanded their power, accepted without demur a sort of *spiritual* domination by the Rozvi, that is to say, the Mambo or the Mambo's delegate had to confirm and preside over the election of a new chief. An example of this is the powerful chief Mangwende. In the Portuguese records of Bocarro and Rezende (about A.D. 1620) Mangwende is noted as the hereditary name of one of Monomotapa's chief ministers (his "feitiçeiro mor"); this supports his own tradition that he is of the same stock as "Nemutapa"; his lands were near Chicova on the Zambezi. But about eight generations ago (say A.D. 1700) Mangwende led his people south of the Mazoe to the great central watershed where he established a rich and independent domain; yet each successive Mangwende, to within living memory, was appointed by a neighbour called Chiduku who had very little temporal power but was descended from the royal Rozvi house. Even today the remaining Rozvi in Mangwende's territory, though poor and backward by modern African standards, are closely allied to the Chief by marriage and are spoken of with respect by their neighbours. The same has been true of Makoni and many other ancient Shona chiefs long after the Rozvi ceased to have any temporal power. There is evidently much truth in their tradition that they preferred peace to war and ruled by purely spiritual means.

The secret of Rozvi rule, then, remains as mysterious as their origin. There may be some truth in one of their fragmentary traditions that they were a branch of the Lozi or Barotse of Northern Rhodesia; but their speech, though now indistinguishable from Shona, was formerly more akin to the Southern Bantu (Sotho) type than to the Western (Lozi). The word "rozvi," moreover, has a meaning in Shona—namely "possessor," usually in the pejorative sense of a robber or usurper, but it has also the sacred sense of a spirit taking possession of a body. It has been argued that they were never a tribe at all but a priestly caste; but against this is the fact that they employed priests taken from older subject peoples. The external control rather than the intimate possession of spiritual power seems always to have been their object.

One of the most important sources of their prestige was probably their control of the Great Zimbabwe temple, seat of the worship of Mwari, the supreme sky-god. This shrine, near Fort

Victoria, had always been outside Monomotapa's borders. It was served by older Shona (or Karanga) peoples, the Mbire and the Hera. There were three sacred officers: Muromo, the mouth or voice of Mwari, supplied by the Mbire; Nzeve, the ears, receiver of petitions to Mwari, supplied by the Hera; Maziso, the eyes, the spies or informants of Mwari, supplied by the Rozvi. The third office was the most powerful because it was the effective link between the temple and the people; it supervised the external organisation of the cult which had two further ranks: the children of Mwari (chiefs and important persons, including women) and the servants of Mwari, the ordinary people.

The three chief offices of Mwari may well be of ancient standing; for—as was said in the previous article—the Portuguese observed them in Kiteve in the sixteenth century; only there the Kiteve had made himself the god. Mwari, on the other hand, was a genuine conception of deity, an invisible, supreme being; although approached through tribal spirits, he and he alone was the source of rain and prosperity. An ancient conception, doubtless, but the Rozvi take-over of the deity may have been a more recent affair, for it is likely that the Mbire and the Hera, not to mention the Venda, were at the Great Zimbabwe before them.

Mbire Ya Svosve (the “Amçoçe” of Antonio Fernandez, 1516) came south from the Ruenya after the fall of his ancestor Makate, that is, about 1550; he probably found the Hera people in possession of the shrine.<sup>1</sup> His descendant, Chiwundoro, a Mbire, was high-priest of the shrine when the Rozvi arrived. The Rozvi story, a typical one, is that the Mambo overcame Chiwundoro and stole his secrets by means of a “spy-wife,” the Mambo’s sister. Thus the traditional situation was reversed; usually the invaders, while remaining politically superior, become ritually subject to the older people by taking wives from them. But the Mambo, by making Chiwundoro his son-in-law, became both politically and ritually superior. After that, he sent out delegates from the shrine to preside over the installing of chiefs throughout the country. From the traditions of Makoni and Mangwende, this date would be about 1720. The centre of worship now

<sup>1</sup> But the people he actually supplanted may have been the Venda who at some unknown date withdrew to the Transvaal and set up a rival shrine there. In that case, the Rozvi, who are akin to the Venda, may have been reclaiming their rights.

shifted from the Great Zimbahwe to the Rozvi stronghold in the Matopo hills.

A point of considerable interest is the position assumed by the Rozvi in the north-east, in Tavara country. There the deity was worshipped not as Mwari but as Dziva Guru, the Great Pool, symbol of rebirth from death. The Rozvi took over this deity also through the ministry of a subject clan, the Romwe, originating from the Zambezi. It is a likely conjecture that they were able to do this because the Monomotapa of the period and some of his chiefs had become Christians. The Rozvi who still remain in the Tavara district—where memories of Monomotapa are not even yet extinct—claim that *they* were the original inhabitants of the land invaded by the first Monomotapa, and they have a story which corresponds exactly—only with Rozvi names—to the Tavara myth of Karuwa (see the previous article). But I suspect that the Rozvi were not in Dziva Guru territory before the seventeenth century and that the Monomotapa of their story is the Christian Mavura, Dom Felipe, or his son, Dom Dominigos. Mukombwe, the pagan brother and supplanter of Dominigos (it may be remembered) made an alliance against the Portuguese with the Rozvi chief whose title then was Changamire.

What seems true in general is that the Rozvi established a sort of unity in worship over a wide area embracing the lands of Southern Rhodesia that were west and south of Monomotapa's former domains. These western and southern lands were to be swept away by the invasions of the next century. But the Mashona within the ancient borders of Monomotapa were to stand firm.

A notable feature of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, before the invasions, was the complete settlement or re-settlement of the great central watershed from the Manyika mountain frontier to the Umvukwe range where Chief Zvimba had kept the same territory since before the Portuguese arrival. The descent of the Budya of Chief M'toko and the Hungwe of Chief Makoni to the east was mentioned in the previous article. Mangwende established his extensive territory to the west of these. Mutasa, a new dynasty from the north, took possession of the ancient kingdom of Manyika. When the American Theodore Bent toured Mashonaland just before it became "Rhodesia," it seemed to him that these four, Makoni, M'toko, Mangwende, Mutasa, still represented the traditions of Monomotapa.

Alongside of these four, from both north and south, came portions of other peoples. Chikwaka, a Kore-kore, settled west of Mangwende; a part of the Nyandoro clan came down from the north-east to the present Marandellas. From the south came a part of the Hera people and set up two chieftaincies, Seke and Chiweshe, below and above the present Salisbury. From the south also, thrusting between them, came a very turbulent section of the Mbire people, the Shawasha, having unceremoniously brushed aside the Rozvi in their way. Later their chief, Chindamora, behaved in an even more outrageous manner, taking wives by force and humiliating his fathers-in-law, Zvimba, Chikwaka and Chiweshe. Perhaps he was obscurely revenging the overthrow of his ancestors Makate and Chiwundoro. Inter-tribal warfare, however, was always on a small scale. Although there were only loose and shifting alliances among this group, they did form a barrier of strong, independent peoples with good natural defences. It was this that kept them free from the slave-traders in Portuguese territory. It procured them also comparative immunity when the terrible invasions from South Africa began in 1833.

The invaders were all fugitives from Chaka the Zulu, trained and hardened in his school of warfare. The first wave, the Angoni, devastated the entire western half of Southern Rhodesia before they crossed the Zambezi at Zumbo and disappeared into Nyasaland and elsewhere. They had defeated and skinned alive the Rozvi Mambo at Inyati in 1834; the Zimbahwe became "ruins" from this time on. The second wave, remembered in Shona as the "Swazi," made the same swathe of destruction in the southern territories, and then hurled themselves upon the central watershed between Umtali and Marandellas. They ravaged the fields, but were not able to subdue the granite hills which the inhabitants, hastily re-acquiring their old habits of stone-building, turned into innumerable fortresses. After two years the Swazi were driven out in a manner which is shrouded in legend. There followed thirty years of peace for these north-east peoples.

Meanwhile, the south and west, blighted by the "Shangwa," the great famine of the mid-century, were suffering yet a third invasion, the one that came to stay, the Matabele of Mzilikazi. He founded Gu-Bulawayo ("place of slaughter") in imitation of Chaka's town and took over the shrine of Mwari, calling it "Mlimo" instead, but keeping the Rozvi as its agents. The Rozvi

of this area now identified themselves with the conquerors and confused their own traditions still farther by starting a story that they too had come from South Africa fleeing from Chaka.

During this time the once-proud name "Karanga," which had originally designated all the ruling peoples between Zambezi and Limpopo, shrank to the broken bands of victims and fugitives in the south and west (often in the foreign form of "Kalaka"), while the name "Shona" came into use for those people, including some of the Rozvi, who maintained their independence in the central and north-eastern districts. It first appears in Dr. Andrew Smith's *Diary* of 1835, where he wrote that "the Ba-Kalaka," the Southern Bantu version of Va-Karanga, "are very much afraid of the Shona." The great missionary Dr. David Livingstone, in his private *Journal* of 1851, also speaks of "the Mashona"; like Smith, he knew of them only by hearsay. "These people are interesting, for they are always spoken of by the other tribes as superior to them both in the arts of peace and war and they always prefer the former unless attacked." This is important; for from Rhodes's time till now it has been assumed that "Mashona" was a term of contempt bestowed by the conquerors from South Africa. The "Ma" may be a foreign addition from the Swazi or Matabele;<sup>1</sup> but Smith's *Diary* and Livingstone's *Journal* seem to give "Shona" an earlier and more honourable history.

In 1868 Lobengula succeeded Mzilikazi. His warriors, finding nothing more to pillage in the south and west, advanced against the central peoples. At the same time the Swazi made a fresh assault from the south. But, after initial terror, the central peoples held firm in their stone forts; Makoni's men, the Hungwe, even won a pitched battle. There was a threat also on the eastern border where the half-caste Portuguese slaver Guveya had established a reign of terror; but he was driven out by the high-spirited Budya of M'toko. The four chiefs meanwhile found time to carry on their traditional feuds, Mangwende against M'toko and Makoni against Mutasa. But some time before 1890, as if sensing the approach of enormous events, they made treaties of everlasting peace.

During the years around 1880 when missionaries, traders and

<sup>1</sup> "Va" is the correct Shona prefix for people, Va-Rozvi, Va-Mbire, etc. "Ma" would denote foreigners, either for foreigners or from them. I have generally tried to avoid the redundant prefix, but "the Mashona" dies hard.

political agents waited with varying purposes at Lobengula's kraal, only an occasional hunter had found his way onto the vast, healthy plateau of Mashonaland. The London Missionary Society under J. S. Moffat, Livingstone's brother-in-law, had arrived in 1859, but they remained always in Matabeleland. The Jesuits came in 1879, but they too shared the general illusion that the Mashona were the abject "dogs" of Lobengula and that the only people worth converting were the invaders from the south. Consequently when Fr. Law, an ex-naval officer, with one other priest and two very able Brothers set out from Bulawayo, their only aim was to reach the kraal of Mzila, Lobengula's ally and counterpart in Swazi territory. Selous, the famous hunter, accompanied them as far as the gap in the great watershed; there he turned north to his favourite haunts on the high plateau, but he urged them to come with him and evangelise the Mashona. Instead, they turned south through the tsetse-ridden valleys to Mzila's kraal, where the two priests died—heroically but with nothing accomplished. The only missionary to come specifically for the Mashona was the Anglican Bishop Knight-Bruce on an exploratory tour in 1888; but the gallant bishop was in such a hurry and knew so little of the language that his report is not very enlightening.

The truth, in spite of persisting legend, is that the Mashona of that time, especially as the traveller went further east, were found to be much more open to civilising influences than the warriors of Lobengula and Mzila. Dirt and drunkenness were common among them, no doubt, but never the hideous savagery which the Matabele took for granted. Their land was free to those who came in friendship; on Mangwende's territory, for instance, there are large segments of Zvimba and Nyandoro who have been living there as friends for more than a century. These Mashona had a talent for compromise as well as a good share of Bantu hospitality and happy domestic life. A distinguished Shona of today, Mr. H. W. Chitepo, who is a poet as well as a barrister, has some verses (here translated) evoking ancestral memories of those days:

The house of Mai Mugari, chief wife of the stronghold of Chinya-matimbi, was a house of very great joy. All we children used to gather there, singing stories and playing riddles, while the pumpkins cooked on the hearth and we ate our peas with smiles.

All strangers who came to the stronghold were treated as children of the home. The Sena who had lost his way was given a place to sleep without asking. The European out hunting had a mat brought out and given to him.

This woman was a wonderful person, her heart was full of kindness, as befits the heart of the Queen, the nurse of the family of the Heavenly One, lord of the boundless earth.

But the boundless earth was contracting fast. The Boers were over the Limpopo: the Portuguese with a vigorous revival were about to snatch Manyikaland: agents of other powers were enticing Lobengula, when Cecil Rhodes launched his mixed Pioneer Column into Mashonaland in 1890.

The Column avoided Bulawayo, for Lobengula had half-repentied of the Rudd Concession and his young warriors were out for blood. It is true that Mashonaland was being occupied in virtue of the Rudd Concession. But Selous the hunter, who guided the Column, knew very well that Lobengula had neither might nor right in the best part of Mashonaland. So, before reaching the site of Salisbury, he branched off with Jameson and others; they went straight to get independent concessions from Chiefs Mutasa and M'toko—just in time to provide a title for repelling the Portuguese.

The concessions were of the same type as the Rudd Concession; in return for "protection" they conceded rights over minerals only. Already, however, large grants of the best farming land had been made in advance to the settlers. These enclosures were a shock to Shona ideas of land tenure, but not a fatal one, there was still plenty of land for everybody. Much more alarming was the unfriendliness of many new settlers: the drafting of forced labour from the villages, the use of the *sjambok*, the employment of South African natives to police the hitherto independent Mashona. Of the independent chiefs, only Mutasa and M'toko had made treaties. The others remained aloof and wary. During the next five uneasy years a vague sense of solidarity among themselves, and even with the Matabele, began to take shape and harden.

When the Matabele rose, in the hiatus of the Jameson Raid, agents from the shrine of Mlimo (or Mwari) sent orders to the Karanga under their control to rise in support. Mediums of the tribal spirits pronounced in favour. In June 1896 the agents passed on to the powerful chiefs of the central and eastern

plateau. In every council some were for, some against. But on 18 June the beacons blazed on the hills of Makoni, Mangwende, Chikwaka, Nyandoro, Svosve, Seke, Zvimba and Chindamora. They took down the new telegraph wires and chopped them into bullets for their ancient muskets; their powder was compounded from rock-rabbit dung. Horrible killings took place of isolated settlers and their wives and children.<sup>1</sup>

The only important chiefs who stood out were Mutasa and M'toko—but that was a near thing. The Budya were all clamouring for war when a young M'toko man, a convert of the Jesuit Fathers who had come up with the Pioneer Column, was sent at great risk to himself to persuade the Chief. The Budya were about to kill him when M'toko intervened. "This is not a game against Guveya," he told his warriors. "These Varungu do not play around." Both he and Mutasa had seen the British in action against the Portuguese and they recognised the inevitable.

The others gambled and lost. Their failure need cause no sentimental regret. On the other hand, it is sentimental hypocrisy to persist in the legend that the Mashona, though not apparently the Matabele, were "guilty of the grossest treachery and ingratitude." Cecil Rhodes knew better. He could not come to the Mashona as he had to the Matabele. But he sent an urgent message saying, "Give Makoni the terms he asks for. Don't ruin another year's harvest." But the terms the commander on the spot gave Makoni were to come out from his stronghold alone and surrender. The messenger who conveyed the terms said that his life would be spared. He was taken, tried quickly and shot. Colonel (then Lieutenant) Harding, who was there, did not like the business. "Makoni was a brave man," he wrote, "and a gentleman in his own way." He describes how the women came tottering out of the dynamited caves, put their babies into the arms of the white soldiers, and then went back to search for their possessions.

Makoni's defeat ended the acutest phase of the crisis. It had been made possible by the unexpected arrival of reinforcements from the east, sent by sea to Beira and expedited by the Portuguese. The Mashona continued to hold out in their caves and

<sup>1</sup> The worst of these massacres were in places under Matabele influence. In some other places, e.g., missions, where friendly relations had been established, warnings to evacuate were given beforehand.

fortresses for a year longer than the Matabele. Dynamite and starvation—razing of villages and destruction of crops—finally reduced them. The last rebels, Mangwende and Zvimba, surrendered in September 1897. Famine and desolation reigned supreme for a time. But one lasting effect of this doleful “Chimurenga” (as it is called) was that the natives of Southern Rhodesia acquired solidarity in defeat. There is not the remotest chance now of “tribal” discord between the 1,500,000 who speak Shona and the 750,000 who speak Ndebele.

The Mashona had gambled and they had lost. They lost any conceded rights they might previously have had. But, like the lady who handed her baby to Lieutenant Harding, they did expect other concessions which are usually made by conquerors to the conquered. Nor were they disappointed. Formerly the conquerors would take wives from the conquered and pay the ritual deference due to the sanctity of the womb. Not quite the same, but anagogical, was the English idealism which proceeded to build up what it had just destroyed. Many of the early Native Commissioners were in love with Africa—with the land, if not with the people—and they cherished its customs. The missionaries, wise and kindly people for the most part, though they did not want wives, they did want children, to foster and educate.

Apart from these very fruitful spheres of friendliness, the main body of the settlers looked on the Mashona only as a labour force for the mines and farms, and, as such, found them thoroughly unsatisfactory. As far as the Mashona were concerned, this dual state of affairs went on unchanged for about fifty years.

My article should really end here. But I am tempted to leap across the fifty years to what I may call “The Second Occupation of Mashonaland” and “The Second Mashona Uprising,” both peaceful ones so far. The “Second Occupation” was the large-scale European<sup>1</sup> immigration which began in 1946, a net average of 10,000 a year. Three-quarters of the present 211,000 Europeans of Southern Rhodesia have settled since 1946. Of the 40,000 immigrants in the four years 1955–58 about 25,000 were from South Africa, many of them Afrikaans-speaking. Just before the 1959 emergency Sir Roy Welensky looked forward to a time when the present 12 to 1 ratio of Africans to Europeans would

<sup>1</sup> In Rhodesia “European” means anyone who has no African or Asian blood. I am not sure how a Turk would be rated.

be reduced to near parity. For various reasons a majority of the latest comers have supported the party most opposed to African advancement.

The "Second Mashona Uprising" began also about 1946 or a little earlier. It was the rush for education. It increased every year, doubling or trebling the increase in schools, until by 1958 the children had rushed the Government off its feet and exhausted its allocated funds. To say that it was still spending twenty times as much per head on a European's education as on an African's was simply to strike against the fundamental axiom of Southern Rhodesia, unchanged by Federation, that "this is a white man's country." For, while public services for Africans, health and education (culminating in the new University) did increase enormously, there was also a hardening of the general European refusal to regard Africans either politically or socially as potential citizens.

Meanwhile, two really urgent and interrelated problems have been swelling ominously. There is not enough land to live on in the Native Reserves allocated in 1930. In the towns there are not enough jobs and not enough wages to support those who cannot live in the Reserves. The average African can still find ways and means, often undesirable, of making ends meet. But, with or without agitation, these two problems are bound to reach bursting-point soon.

Because the Government gave no sign of being interested (though in fact it was) in these two problems, there arose the demand for an African Party, and consequently for African enfranchisement—a demand which has been neatly inserted into the disputes about Federation. It is not a mere trouble-making demand; it is a reasonable price for something the Government vitally needs: native co-operation. For even when reforms can be devised for the two problems mentioned, it will need whole-hearted and intelligent adaptation by Africans to make them work.

At the moment of writing it is a vast improvement that Sir Edgar Whitehead has sat down with an unofficial African leader. Sir Edgar is the only man who has the power to shift the block of European prejudice sufficiently to make the bridge of "Partnership" possible. In spite of many tactical errors (hardly to be wondered at in the unprecedented squalls that have been occurring) he has maintained a certain massive central integrity which

is the only hope between the two extremes of "negotiating from fear" and "fearing to negotiate" at all.

On trial too will be the Mashona. Do they possess that proficiency in "the arts of peace" which they were said to have when Livingstone first heard of them in 1851?

It goes without saying that the hopes of the Catholic Church in Southern Rhodesia are intimately bound up with this first attempt to achieve "Partnership" and last chance of saving it.

## RELIGIOUS SOCIOLOGY

By

EMILE PIN

**I**N 1950, the term Religious Sociology would have meant very little to anyone except a few specialists, mostly non-Catholic. The Catholic bibliography on this subject consisted of a few dozen titles. Would it have been possible to find throughout the world more than one or two Catholic universities which included it in their syllabus?

Ten years later, in 1960, the Catholic book-list comprises several hundred titles, about 500, on religious sociology in the form of books or articles. An International Conference on Religious Sociology has been started, and in the course of these ten years has already held four international Congresses; and throughout the world there are about forty research centres devoted to the sociology of Catholicism. Religious Sociology is taught in many Catholic universities, starting with the Pontifical Universities in Rome. It is against this background that we must set the work of Canon Fernand Boulard, one of the greatest exponents of such research, and one of those who have contributed to their growth. His book *Premiers Itinéraires en Sociologie Religieuse*,<sup>1</sup> has just been published by Darton, Longman and Todd under the title *Introduction to Religious Sociology*.<sup>2</sup>

How far back must we go to find the first signs of this rapid

<sup>1</sup> Canon Fernand Boulard, *Premiers Itinéraires en Sociologie Religieuse*, with a preface by Gabriel Le Bras, Les Editions Ouvrières, Economie et Humanisme, Paris, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> Canon Fernand Boulard, *An Introduction to Religious Sociology, Pioneer work in France*, translation and introduction to English edition by M. J. Jackson, preface by Professor Gabriel Le Bras; Darton, Longman and Todd, 21s.

growth of Catholic Religious Sociology? It could be said to stem from the Council of Trent, which laid down that all parish priests should keep a *Liber status animarum*.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand one might trace its origins to some of the civil censuses of the last century, which included a certain amount of religious information and inspired a few fitful attempts at research among Catholics.<sup>2</sup> It would seem, though, that the immediate cause of this rapid development is to be found in the considerable anxiety felt by certain members of the Catholic clergy faced with the spectacle of growing dechristianisation. The first indications of this anxiety were some writings which, though fired by great apostolic zeal, were none too particular about factual accuracy.<sup>3</sup> These books merely spoke of apostolic anxiety in a general way, but they set off many reactions, especially the desire to get closer to the truth by correcting over-hasty statements as well as to make a diagnosis and apply some remedy. These new preoccupations were fortunately able to join up with another current of thought, originating this time in the universities and represented by sociologists such as Joseph Fichter, S.J., or Thomas O'Dea in the United States, or by historians such as Gabriel Le Bras in France.<sup>4</sup>

Canon Fernand Boulard stands at the confluence of these currents.

Formerly an almoner of the Jeunesse Rurale Catholique,<sup>5</sup> he went over to the school of Gabriel Le Bras and soon became his colleague. Making use of the facts assembled by Le Bras and supplementing them with research of his own, he published in 1948 the *Carte de la pratique religieuse de la France rurale*.<sup>6</sup> Then in

<sup>1</sup> Concilium Tridentinum, Sessio XXIV, De Reformatione Matrimonii, cap. 1 and 2 (11 November, 1563).

<sup>2</sup> V. G. Census of 1851: Report on Religious Worship (England and Wales) or G. Bertolotti, *Statistica Ecclesiastica d'Italia*, Savona, 1885.

<sup>3</sup> R. Sarabia, *Espana . . . : es católica?*, Madrid, 1939; A. Hurtado Cruchaga, *Es Chile un país católico?*, Santiago, 1941; H. Godin, Y. Daniel, *France, Pays de Mission?*, Ed. du Cerf, Paris, 1943.

<sup>4</sup> Professor Gabriel Le Bras, Historian of Canon Law, at present Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Paris, has written since 1931, in addition to his strictly juridical publications, many articles urging Catholics to find out more about the true state of religious practice. In 1942 he published his *Introduction à l'histoire de la Pratique Religieuse* (P.U.F., Paris, 2 vols.), and in 1955 his *Etudes de Sociologie Religieuse*, (P.U.F., Paris, 2 vols.).

<sup>5</sup> In 1945 he published his *Problèmes Missionnaires de la France Rurale*, 2 vols.

<sup>6</sup> First published in November 1947 in *Cahiers du Clergé Rural*, 13 Rue du docteur Roux, where it is possible to obtain the 1957 edition. Holland, Belgium and Germany have also drawn up maps of religious practice.

1950 appeared his work which has since remained a classic, *Essor ou Déclin du Clergé Français*, a monumental enquiry into the present position of the French clergy and their future prospects.<sup>1</sup> Ever since then, Canon Boulard has been tirelessly piling up facts, spurring on research in dioceses of France and other countries and urging hierarchy and clergy to take a realistic view and adapt their pastoral methods accordingly. In 1954 he felt the need to draw up a summary of all the investigations made by himself and his colleagues. The outcome was the work we shall now deal with, small in size but rich in content.

*An Introduction to Religious Sociology* has two parts. In the first, chapters one to five are devoted to the results of the earliest investigations carried out, whilst chapter six discusses the uses of sociology in pastoral work. The second contains advice about methods. The English edition has also an introduction by M. J. Jackson and two appendices for the benefit of English readers; some useful information and a bibliography, which we shall consider briefly at the end.

The account of field-work done in France is divided into five chapters: (1) The Map of Religious Practice in Rural France; (2) The Present Position of Geographical Research; (3) The Present Position of Historical Research; (4) Social Milieu and Collective Mentality; (5) Some Complementary Lines of Research.

Canon Boulard has acquired a subtle faculty for assessing religious life in terms of its geographical dimensions. The map he has made and has been continually perfecting is commented on in the first chapter. It is a precision instrument which makes countless historical or sociological investigations possible. It shows the various rural districts of France, divided into three categories of religious practice, mainly in terms of the performance of Easter duties and attendance at Sunday Mass.

The first category—A—(shown in black on the map) comprises the areas where most of the adult population remains faithful to Easter communion and goes to Mass on Sunday. This category represents about two-fifths of the country.<sup>2</sup>

The second category—B—(in hachures on the map) comprises

<sup>1</sup> Fernand Boulard, *Essor ou Déclin du Clergé Français*, Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1950.

<sup>2</sup> It is stated on page 8 that 34·2% of French people over 14 are faithful to Easter communion.

the geographical areas where the whole population "participates in the great religious events of life," though only a small minority is faithful to the Easter commandment and Sunday Mass. This category, which Gabriel Le Bras calls that of "seasonal conformity" because "the population conforms to the Christian traditions of France at the different seasons of life—childhood, adolescence, marriage, burial"—covers the other three-fifths. But from this area must be subtracted the district belonging to category C.

In category C (shown in white) can be found "a minimum of 20% of children not baptised, or not attending catechism." These are called "mission areas." They cover about one-twentieth of the whole countryside.

Canon Boulard clearly shows the pastoral consequences of these variations: in the parts belonging to category A, "the pastoral ministry of the Church from the pulpit and in the confessional is in direct touch with public opinion"; in those belonging to category B, "everyone, with rare exceptions, is linked with the Church by the occasional offices at the high points of life," and so the clergy must use with profit these certain points of contact. On the other hand it is not possible to rely on such opportunities in places coming under category C; the Church must begin once again to win acceptance in the human community.

The second chapter comments on the religious geography of rural France. What are the "areas of majority Catholic observance"? Where are "the (partially) detached areas"? The districts form compact blocs and are not a random collection of parishes. It is evidently a question of "collective behaviour." "If we cross France from Brest to Strasbourg we find that a countryman between Brest and Angers performs his Easter duties; between Angers and Nancy he does not; between Nancy and Strasbourg he does. If a man changes his region, he soon changes his religious behaviour." There normally follows the theoretical conclusion: "When we ask about the dechristianisation of a parish, it is usual and natural to produce local reasons. But we must now recognise that there are immense regions of minority practice, and it becomes clear that we cannot explain the falling off or the maintenance of practice in such vast areas simply by local causes. There are general causes." There follows also a practical con-

clusion which has become a constant theme in any active enterprise undertaken by Canon Boulard. It is not possible for a priest confined to his parish to do much against such general causes. Where there are collective symptoms and causes there must be collective action.

Subsequent pages describe a few of these collective causes: the impact of industrialism together with its technological outlook, the atomising of civilisation, conflict of civilisation, etc. There are also causes which are properly speaking historical, that is to say due to outstanding events in the past which have left an enduring mark on a particular district. Chapter three is given over to these. The present situation of rural France has not been produced by spontaneous generation. Nor can one say that it is of recent growth. Admittedly the performance of Easter duties just before the French Revolution was universal (though much more so than was attendance at Sunday Mass)—but what forces produced this effect? The facts quoted by the author give us some idea: did not Voltaire himself feel bound to continue practising? When the revolution came people rediscovered their freedom and showed what they really felt, but different districts reacted in different ways. "It may well be asked, since the protective barrier collapsed quite suddenly all round, why some regions today should be Christian and others indifferent?" The author goes on to show how the signs of dechristianisation could already be discerned in regions which figure today among the least Christian. He even questions whether certain parts of the French countryside have ever been evangelised. These are, of course, mere pointers, but they are enough to encourage the work of other investigators, whose number has greatly increased in the last few years.

Chapter four shows that these collective religious phenomena are not confined to geographical areas, but rather that the social milieux, that is, either the systems formed by individuals in their day-to-day relationships, or the economic and social categories, have different religious attitudes. Some very interesting maps prove that, whatever the absolute standard of local religious practice, the lower professional and social grades have inferior rates of practice than other sections of the community. An example taken from Italy<sup>1</sup> shows that this is not only the case in France. Since the appearance of the work being reviewed here,

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Don Aldo Leoni's *Sociologia e Geografia Religiosa di una Diocesi*, Gregorian University Press, Rome, 1953.

several studies<sup>1</sup> have established these connections and tried to explain them. These have indeed become a central problem in apostolic work and must be borne in mind for any understanding of recent apostolic experiments made by the Church in France.

Chapter five completes this survey by outlining some specially important investigations carried out by other workers: that of the connection between the way a man votes and his religious practice; of religious practice in large towns, which had scarcely been started while this book was being written and has since made great strides;<sup>2</sup> of religious practice in other countries,<sup>3</sup> and lastly of the continuance of these "zones" of religious practice across the Belgian frontier. This last indicates the historical and social depths of the phenomena underneath the practice of religion: the transversal zones where practice is either high or low carry on right across the frontier, even if the general level of practice is clearly lower in France.

In chapter six another set of questions is approached. It is no longer simply a matter of describing the field-work which has been accomplished, but of justifying it and of showing its practical implications. Having reaffirmed that like all human and social sciences, religious sociology is the auxiliary of pastoral theology and cannot claim to supersede it, the author outlines the problem of the social determinisms and the concerted actions it uncovers: are holiness and the grace of God not enough? Is not faith a free personal act? Religious sociology does not set out to

<sup>1</sup> Paul Minion, *Le peuple liégeois, structures sociales et attitudes religieuses*, Secrétariat Interparoissial, Liège, 1955; Emile Pin, *Pratique Religieuse et Classes Sociales dans une paroisse urbaine, Saint Pothin à Lyon*, Spes, Paris, 1956; François-André Isambert, "L'abstention religieuse de la classe ouvrière," in *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, XXV (Jul.-Dec. 1958), pp. 116-134, etc.

<sup>2</sup> The churches of all French towns of over 100,000 inhabitants were subjected one Sunday to an enquiry about Sunday attendance, in the form of a questionnaire handed out to those present and filled in during the course of the Mass instead of the sermon. For the first results of these enquiries, see Jean Chelini, *La Ville et l'Eglise*, Ed. du Cerf, 1957.

<sup>3</sup> The author mentions the work of Fr. Jos. Fichter, S.J., especially his *Southern Parish* (University of Chicago Press, 1951). He makes a criticism of this which does not seem to us quite justified; he complains that Fr. Fichter made only the parishioners the objects of his investigation and drew up his estimates without any consideration of the large number of baptised Catholics who have cut themselves off from the Church. I should have thought that Fr. Fichter's aim (the study of the dynamics of a parish) and that of Canon Boulard (to measure the religious vitality of a whole population) were sufficiently different to justify different methods.

deny these basic truths. But is it necessary to shut one's eyes to reality in order to preserve them? Is the discovery of the interconnection between religious practice and social stratification the cause of the existence of such interconnection? Does the affirmation that the exercise of liberty is conditioned suppress liberty? Grace and freedom do not work together in a separated "interior" world; the work of redemption is carried out in and through the historical and social life of a visible Church. If liberty is to be evoked by the gospel message, man must first be able to receive this message. This statement is but an extension of the principle laid down by St. Paul and recalled by Canon Boulard: "How shall they believe in the name of the Lord whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"<sup>1</sup> To hear is not just a physical phenomenon, but a psycho-social complexus which supposes some communication between speaker and hearer. Communication demands a whole set of cultural and institutional conditions which even the best will in the world cannot replace. To find out the laws which govern "hearing" is not to find out ways of constraining liberty, which will ultimately always bear responsibility for the acceptance of grace. If we find that certain homogeneous sections of the population give a poor "response," should we accuse them of ill will, or can we not legitimately suppose that they have not "heard"? Consequently pastoral effort must surely be directed towards enabling them to "hear." Holiness will remain the final key to apostolic work, but "the sanctity required of a churchman implies a high standard of professional competence and concentrated work to achieve it."<sup>2</sup>

The practical conclusions which are drawn centre round the idea we have already mentioned: collective problems require collective solutions, and according to the author this means collective action on a geographical basis, collective action adapted to each different background, and action which will be followed up. The first of these three aims is that especially connected with the name of Canon Boulard, an indefatigable campaigner for collective pastoral work. The social and geographical foundation of this apostolic necessity is "*la zone humaine*," which the translator has rendered by "natural grouping." Natural grouping

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 10, 14, quoted by the author on p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> p. 82.

is a geographical area in which economic, recreational and cultural relations form a relative unity.<sup>1</sup> The natural grouping may coincide with an administrative, civil or ecclesiastical division, but not always. Its foundation is usually geographical: a valley, a plain or a plateau converging upon a natural centre. It may have a social and economic foundation: a network of land or water transport, a commercial or industrial centre. These human units are very often smaller than dioceses—they may also overlap the boundaries of several dioceses. Canon Boulard has become the promoter of pastoral activity based on these natural groupings. The bishop is to appoint for each a supervisor who will see in practice that the efforts of the various parishes are co-ordinated. The clergy of these parishes are invited to work as a team. For this, apart from meetings to which all concerned are summoned, there have been organised separate working committees to deal with major apostolic questions—liturgy, preaching, catechising, youth, recreation and sociology. These committees suggest solutions which the parishes are invited to try out, and then to adopt. Several dioceses have already made use of these organisations, in France and other countries. Diocesan frameworks like this fit their pastoral work to the real requirements of problems, restore to the diocese its original role of leadership, break down the autocracy of parishes (outmoded in a world where communications have greatly widened contacts) and, last but not least, put an end to the isolation of the country priest. This pastoral development will probably be submitted for study by the Ecumenical Council since Canon Boulard has been appointed a member of the preparatory Committee for diocesan organisation.

The second part of the book can be dealt with more briefly. It consists of instructions on method for the use of those without technical training who would like, all the same, to conduct investigations into religious practice,<sup>2</sup> draw up maps, study the vitality of parishes, place them under the prepared headings, analyse the fostering of

<sup>1</sup> "Zone humaine has become the not very satisfactory *natural grouping*, the best of a number of proposed phrases." (Introduction to the English edition by M. J. Jackson, p. xix).

<sup>2</sup> Since then there has appeared under the direction of Canon Boulard a collective study on method: Centre Catholique de Sociologie Religieuse, *Comment réaliser un recensement d'assistance à la Messe Dominicale*, Editions Fleurus, Paris, 1960. See also the very practical little work of Jean Labbens, *Les 99 Autres*, Editions Vitte, Lyon-Paris, 1954.

vocations to the Church, consider people's attitudes to religion in general, undertake historical research and evaluate the various causes of the facts which come to light. Chapters eight and nine and also the appendices which follow—"some useful information and bibliography"<sup>1</sup>—contain ample documentation which enables the reader to refer to more detailed works on each particular problem.

These appendices have been put together for the use of English readers. Organisations in Britain likely to take an interest in such research are listed, and the bibliography includes a section on Great Britain and one on the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Reading through the bibliography and the Introduction, both by M. J. Jackson, we see that even if Religious Sociology in this country has not made all the progress that could be wished for, it has nonetheless established itself firmly. In 1851, long before studies in Religious Sociology started on the Continent, Great Britain had had a national census of religion; and the works of Charles Booth at the end of the century provided a very full account of the religious bodies in London.<sup>3</sup> And if it is true that studies in this field have been less frequent over here than abroad, it should be remembered that English Catholicism did not have the same immediate reasons for worrying about its position as the traditionally Catholic countries. For a long time it had been aware of its position as a minority. But the reasons for needing to understand this position are not less pressing because they have been there for a long time. This it is which accounts not only for the investigations which are started,<sup>4</sup> but particularly for the

<sup>1</sup> The bibliography stops at 1957. At the end of the article which we recently wrote for *Social Compass* (1960, No. 1, pp. 75-86): "La Sociologie du Catholicisme depuis 1956," there can be found a bibliography to fill up this gap.

<sup>2</sup> These bibliographies are necessarily selective and could never include all the books and articles. In the section on the U.S., however, no mention is made of Jos. Fichter's important book, *Social Relations in the Urban Parish*, University of Chicago Press, 1954. It would be hard to find a better work about town parishes.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London*, 3rd series, Religious influences, 8 vols., Macmillan, London, 1902.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., these four works indicated in the British section of the bibliography: *The Church's Understanding of Itself*, S.C.M., London, 1957 (a study of four Church of England parishes); E. R. Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City*, Lutterworth, London, 1957; B. Wilson, *Social Aspects of Religious Sects*, dissertation of the University of London, 1955; J. Hight, *The Churches in Scotland Today*, Jackson, Son and Co., Glasgow, 1950. A more complete bibliography can be found in C. K. Ward, "Sociological Research in the Sphere of Religion in Great Britain," in *Sociologia Religiosa* (Padua, Via del Seminario, 11, Italia) Nos. 3-4 (1959), 79-94.

birth in 1953 of the Catholic *Newman Demographic Survey* which has undertaken a large-scale enquiry in sixteen British dioceses, comprising an annual census of all Catholics, their frequenting of the sacraments and assistance at Sunday Mass, as well as a census of converts.<sup>1</sup> This enquiry, directed at all parishes of the dioceses in question, is even ahead of the investigations undertaken in France, where only country parishes have been accounted for, town parishes having for the most part only carried out investigations of Sunday church-attendances.

Enquiries about religious practice do not cover every aspect of Catholic life. Many other studies are necessary for a complete evaluation of the Church's position in any given country: the study of accepted standards of behaviour, of actual behaviour, that of beliefs, of attitudes towards God, His saints, His Church, the clergy; the study of religious opinions, the Church's organisation and hierarchical structure, and of what might be called its micro-structure, the small groups which assure the Church's social control over the individuals of which they are made up. All these studies are certainly indispensable, but enquiries about religious practice have already made possible an estimate of the number of those who have regular contact with the Church and take seriously the duties which it lays on them. As Canon Boulard points out, not all who practise are necessarily good Christians; but what then are we to say of those who do not practise at all? "The study of religious practice is therefore a sort of eloquent *a fortiori* which demonstrates the necessity of intervention and at which points to intervene."<sup>2</sup> This sentence, which stresses both the necessity and the limitations of enquiries into religious practice, as well as their great apostolic usefulness, seems a good summing up of the humble but magnificent task to which Canon Boulard has given himself for the service of the Church.

<sup>1</sup> The Newman Demographic Survey's first enquiry was into the school population: "The Newman Demographic Survey, Statistics of the Catholic Schoolchildren of England and Wales," *The Tablet*, 5 Nov. 1955, pp. 449-450. See also *Youth and Religion, A Special Number of New Life*, *New Life*, 14, Nos. 1 and 2, London, 1958, an extensive interview survey carried out by the Newman Demographic Survey.

<sup>2</sup> p. 78. We have recently published an outline of works in religious sociology carried out over the past ten years, cf. *Revue de l'Action Populaire*, Feb. 1961, No. 145. For a study on Religious Psycho-Sociology, "*Psycho-Sociologie de l'Appartenance Religieuse*" by Père H. Carrier, Gregorian University Press, Rome, 1960.

# MARY PORTRAYED—I

By  
VINCENT CRONIN

“**S**HE WAS GRAVE and dignified in all her actions. She spoke little and only when it was necessary to do so. She listened readily and could be addressed easily. She greeted everyone. She was of medium height, but some say that she was slightly taller than that. She would speak to everyone fearlessly and clearly, without laughter or agitation, and she was specially slow to anger. Her complexion was of the colour of ripe wheat, and her hair was auburn. Her eyes were bright and keen, and light brown in colour, and the pupils were of an olive-green tint. Her eyebrows were arched and deep black. Her nose was long, her lips were red and full, and overflowing with the sweetness of her words. Her face was not round, but somewhat oval. Her hand was long, and her fingers also.”

In these words Mary is described by Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, who died about 404.<sup>1</sup> It is an attractive picture such as Jan van Eyck or Roger van der Weyden might have painted, yet it comes as a relief to know that it is not an authentic description but pious imagining. We have St. Augustine’s authority for the fact that in the early Church there existed no clear tradition about Mary’s appearance. Each Christian was free to imagine her according to his own highest ideal.

About the woman most often portrayed in the world’s art we are forced to admit that we do not even know the colour of her hair or eyes. The name Mary, derived from a root *rwm*, meaning “august,” suggests a little about her bearing, nothing about her appearance. Her age too remains unknown. Jewish girls were marriageable at twelve and a half, but we have no evidence that Mary was betrothed so young. The dark-complexioned Byzantine icons said to have been painted by St. Luke are now known to belong to the sixth century. We are faced with the curious

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Nicephorus Callistus, *Eccles. Hist.* xxiii, ed. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. 145, col. 815.

paradox that all the great painters of the Christian tradition have striven to depict a woman about whose age, features and expression they had no visual or oral evidence at all.

They have been obliged, therefore, to project their own highest ideal of love onto the figure of Mary, whose appearances thus illustrate the whole history and development of the Christian West. Subtract Mary and we lose the best part of the world's art. Paradoxically, however, since her grace and mystery are both unfathomable, no portrait of Mary can ever be fully satisfying in all respects. This very difficulty of the subject has acted as a challenge and stimulated artists of many countries and every period to achieve a perfect portrait, to realise the ideal, to make Mary a second time incarnate.

Religious art is required to suggest the human and transcendent in one. A too human portrayal of Christ will foster the Nestorian heresy, while too great an emphasis on His Divine nature will pave the way for Monophysite thinking. With Mary, her spiritual qualities must suggest the divine, yet always stop short of the divine. And so continually we find a tension between the human and transcendent, between Mary the young Jewish girl of Nazareth and God's Mother, chosen from all ages to be Queen of Heaven.

Let us glance quickly through the history of portraits of Mary. First—and of supreme importance for every subsequent period—the paintings of the catacombs, which later in this article we shall be considering closely. The Mary of the Byzantine mosaics: for almost a thousand years a grand, golden, purposely unchanging image. Meanwhile the West is developing the small-scale art of a beleaguered religion—Mary in miniature; interpreting Byzantine originals in terms of native skills and mood that range from the geometrical patterns of the Book of Kells to grim, squat, blackened Romanesque statues. Next comes the Mary of Gothic sculpture—crowned, holding a flowering sceptre, timeless and expressionless as the schoolmen's "universal"; gradually, under Franciscan influence, stirring, becoming personal and tender.

It is the Flemings who first domesticate Mary, bring her into their solid, shining houses and deck her with brocades, velvets and finely wrought merchandise. Italy prefers a less homely, more soaring approach, ranging from the flowing line of Botticelli to

Raphael's peaceful stillness. So far the glorious and joyful mysteries have been chiefly told; now, in the late fifteenth century, Germany enters with a harsher but necessary note, emphasising Mary's physical sufferings. We are here in the full spate of emotional art which at the Counter-Reformation turns to drama, tension, struggle. Religious painters pick up their brushes in defence of their right to paint at all. The mood of this period can be summed up as a strenuous attempt, over against the Reformers, to reunite heaven and earth. Rubens' canvases—Mary surrounded by Angels, Mary interceding with Christ, Mary triumphing over Heresy—are all so many salvoes in a dogmatic battle.

France chastens and strengthens the structure of Counter-Reformation baroque: under *le roi soleil* we find Poussin interpreting Mary in terms of Descartes' *idée claire*: painting a Holy Family of calm, controlled, almost Stoic figures arranged according to strict geometrical principles. From Poussin's rather ponderous and statuesque Mary the rococo reacts into light, ethereal, highly-mannered figures, soaring and often actually taking flight. Then at the French Revolution the thread of tradition is abruptly snapped, and for almost a century religious art, which cannot thrive without rules and shared assumptions, falters and wavers, trying to express itself in old styles, chiefly those of early Renaissance Italy. Finally artists such as Gauguin, Matisse and Henry Moore turn pre-Christian or pagan iconography to the service of Mary, while more and more the mainstream of Christian art passes to the missionary countries, just as once it had passed from Byzantium to raw Ireland, Britain and France.

Even this cursory glance reveals something of the extraordinary richness and variety of Marian art—and we have been considering only the mainstream. Alongside the great schools exist numerous other particular iconographic developments, such as the Virgin of Mercy, gathering the members of a confraternity under her cloak; the Virgin in Triumph, a favourite in sixteenth-century France; and those strange early baroque Nativities set in towering but truncated churches. These curiosities should not be forgotten any more than the obscurer epithets bestowed on Mary by theologians of the early and medieval Church—Cloud with a Rain of Graces, Snow Brighter than Earthly Snow, Table of the

Bread of Life, Lovable Aqueduct: bold imagery, whether verbal or pictorial, is a sure measure of deep affection.

We have put the emphasis on richness and variety, yet through all these many developments of Marian iconography there does seem to run a unifying theme: Mary is somehow different and better than ordinary women, and so must be depicted in an exceptional way. From eternity she was chosen to bear the living God, she was born immaculate, remaining sinless and ever a virgin. Her exceptional quality was summed up once and for all in the angelic salutation: "Hail Mary, full of grace!" To paint Mary one must discover how to paint grace.

The history of Mary in art is therefore the history of man's search for natural or man-made objects or for a particular style which will provide a visible equivalent for that which is invisible: for grace. Here are some of their equivalents: intellectual paradox; chiaroscuro; tapering body and fingers; sky-blue clothes; billowing drapery; tender playfulness; even at times—especially in Leonardo da Vinci—a smile. And hence too the variety of types: Mary the dutiful housewife, Mary the queen; young, old; poor, bejewelled; tense, peaceful; humble, triumphant; squat, willowy; accessible, aloof—the list could be extended indefinitely.

Yet this very variety which we take for granted in Marian portraiture is by no means an inevitable state of affairs. For centuries in the Eastern Empire Mary had a single, unique and, as it were, official face, which could on no account be changed by the individual artist. Even Mary's stance and seated position were strictly regulated. It was held that only through an unchanging representation could the faithful pierce the veil of visible signs and communicate with the real Mary lying behind and beyond her image. Had the Papacy been established in Constantinople instead of Rome, perhaps all our portraits of Mary would resemble each other as closely as do the Madonnas in Russian icons.

But in fact the variety is there, dazzling, bewildering, challenging us to make head or tail of it. In this and the following article I want to look at two very different epochs and examine the attitude of their artists to Mary, not as they might word that attitude in a prepared statement, but as it emerges unconsciously in their pigments and style. For each picture of Mary is also partly a self-portrait of the artist and his age. The two periods I have

chosen are in sharpest possible contrast: the Roman catacombs, and rococo art. In the first article I shall consider the earliest attempts to portray Mary: in their historical context, then against a much wider background; in the second article I shall look at the final flowering of that same tradition before it was guillotined by the French Revolution; and end by attempting to isolate certain constant factors at work within and behind the variety of Marian iconography.

### *Mary in the Roman Catacombs*

Christianity, like Judaism from which it sprang, was from the first unalterably hostile to all idolatry. Aversion to idols, and consequently distrust of all pagan art, was the mark of Christian and Jew alike. St. Clement of Alexandria, who died in 216, says that art, being material, can never be worthy of God, and a little later Tertullian argues that the arts are a devilish invention, conducive only to the worship of false gods. One of the reasons for this excessive caution was the favour enjoyed by images in certain Gnostic sects. The Carpocratians, for example, adored a bevy of images including Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle and Christ, while the Emperor Alexander Severus, in the third century, honoured busts of benefactors of the human race: Abraham, Apollonius of Tyana and Jesus. Gnostic jewels have been discovered in Italy engraved with pictures of angels and even of the Good Shepherd. Struggling to survive as a distinct body, the Church had to be wary of art, by its very nature ambiguous and possibly compromising.

So it is not the Church that created Christian art. For some time she probably remained indifferent to its first manifestations in the "burial clubs" which Christians, like other distinct groups within the Empire, were beginning to form. Rich Christian families reserved space in their cemeteries for the dead of their poorer brethren, and these Christian cemeteries by the end of the second century had spread throughout the Empire. They scarcely differed from cemeteries of other sects, each of which, whether under the patronage of a Roman god, of Jehovah or of Mithras, had evolved a funerary art. Many non-Christian paintings attest belief in a future life. On several pagan sarcophagi, for example, the soul is represented as a girl seated on a ship which crosses the

waves and finally makes port, while the myths of Diana and Endymion, Cupid and Psyche are often used to symbolise the soul's survival.

It was natural, therefore, that Christians like other sects should wish to decorate their cemeteries with representations of their beliefs. Sometimes the same artist would put his talent in the service of both an old and the new religion. A series of pagan lamp-moulds found at Ostia with the signature Anniser (Annius Serapiodorus) bear, some the image of the Good Shepherd, others pictures of pagan gods.

The earliest Christian art, dating from the first century, consists of purely decorative frescoes: stylised architecture, doors and columns, imitation marble plaques, pastoral scenes with flocks of goats, sheep and bulls. Later, pictures of the Four Seasons reflect a popular taste of the period. Putti, like those that play an important part in Pompeian art, are also found, disporting themselves, gathering grapes and treading out wine.

The first sign of a distinctively Christian spirit comes with the choice of certain motifs, popular at the time, which seemed to offer a symbolic meaning in conformity with Christianity. Pastoral scenes were introduced no longer for their own sake but to suggest the joys of Paradise. The story of Ulysses attached to his mast, ears stopped with wax, was reproduced on a Christian sarcophagus: evidently to suggest the Christian soul escaping the temptations of siren voices by attaching itself to the Cross. Orpheus, too, charming even the wildest beasts with his lyre, is represented as a figure of Christ.

A peacock appears, to symbolise the immortal soul (peacock's flesh was believed to be incorruptible), a dove the Holy Spirit, while Christ is shown as vine, as lamb and even more often as fish. A number of small fish—ivory, mother of pearl and enamel—have been found in the catacombs, some pierced, so as to be worn round the neck. Sometimes the fish is linked with a dove and olive branch, and the words "In peace and in Christ," sometimes with an anchor and the words "Hope in Christ." The anchor, in fact, and the cross are the two most distinctive Christian symbols of this early period, though the latter is rarely depicted by itself, perhaps because until the time of Constantine the cross still served as the instrument of death for the worst criminals. As for specifically Christian figures, the most popular—

both symbolising the union of the soul with Christ—were the Good Shepherd and the “orante.” The Good Shepherd—usually a young beardless peasant, with bare legs and sandals, carrying a sheep on his shoulders—depicts not Christ but the shepherd of the parable. That is to say, it is not a portrait or direct representation but a symbol, a reminder. As for the orante, this is a woman in long robes, arms raised symmetrically in prayer, the palms facing forwards. The orante seems to symbolise union with Christ: usually the union of the soul of a particular Christian buried in the catacombs.

This early Christian art is imbued with symbolism and allegory. Since the soul is represented by a woman, then a woman we may logically expect to see represented not realistically but by some symbol. This in fact is what we find. A fresco of a lamb between two wolves in the Cemetery of Pretextatus we know from inscriptions over the animals represents Susanna and the Elders.<sup>1</sup> Why was this Old Testament scene depicted in the new Christian era? Because it threw light on the dominant theme of the catacombs—after-life and union with Christ: it is in fact an illustration of part of a third-century prayer for the dying: “Deliver this soul, O Lord, even as you saved Noah from the flood . . . and Susanna from false charges.”

Such then was the background for the first representation in art of Christ’s mother. Given popular taste, the odds were surely in favour of depicting Mary under a symbolic form: as a flower or a star, a ewe or a ship, perhaps as a mountain spring, since pastoral scenes stood for the height of happiness. Clearly the surface of the rough, humid, underground rock would have been added reason for some such simplification. But no, Christian art followed not the probable but the improbable course. When we turn to frescoes in the Cemetery of Priscilla, dating perhaps from the first half of the second century, we find among the symbolic animals and anagrams an actual woman. And this is the first picture of Mary.

A woman in no way different in features, physique and dress from countless other women decorating Roman houses and halls of the period. Her cheeks are full, her arms robust. She wears on

<sup>1</sup> Reproductions of this and other catacomb paintings referred to in this article are to be found in G. B. de Rossi: *Roma sotterranea; Le Pitture delle Catacombe Romane, illust. da G. Wilpert* (Rome, 1903).

her head a light transparent veil and the folds and creases of her drapery are clearly marked. She is not alone. On her knees she holds a babe who, even while clinging to her breast, turns his head so that we can see him. The woman's identity would still perhaps be doubtful but for the figure of a man, draped in a pallium, who stands in front of her pointing to a star. This is evidently the prophet Isaiah or Balaam, who compares the coming of the Messiah to the rising of a star.

The style of painting is Hellenistic, therefore elegant, mannered, decorative, with a tendency to movement and exuberance of detail. By modelling in light and shade the artist has been able to suggest even on the flat rock surface rounded forms. But compared with the frescoes of Pompeii, for example, the technique is rather crude and underdeveloped. As Malraux has noted, the characteristics of Christian catacomb art are precisely its poverty and awkwardness.

Certain features of this first portrait demand attention. Mary is linked with her son, on whom her importance depends. She is not given any special attributes, not even a name: she is simply a woman, but she is a woman foretold. The weight of the Old Testament is heavy upon these early Christians. Mary is important because she is the fulfilment of prophecy. She is a very human figure, this first Mary. But already the artist has found a way of indicating her relative importance. The prophet is small in proportion to Mary and his silhouette is merely sketched.

Another fresco in the same catacomb, dating from the second half of the third century, probably also depicts Mary. It shows a young mother seated, clad in a white robe with purple borders such as were worn by Roman patrician women, suckling a child. Bold brush strokes give the impression of an energetic, forceful woman, in keeping with the high birth and rank suggested by her dress. Mary here belongs to a bigger composition, the central figure of which is an orante. On the right of this personification of a departed soul sits an old man, who draws the attention of two young people—a man and a woman—either to the orante (the position of the figures makes certainty impossible) or to the mother and child seated on the left. Now, the young man seems to be holding a piece of clothing to the young woman. If so, the scene probably represents the clothing of a virgin dedicated to God. The old man might then be the bishop of Rome, and his

gesture would accompany words similar to those of St. Ambrose in the course of a ceremony which took place a hundred years after the date of this fresco. St. Ambrose's words, spoken while indicating a picture of Mary, were: "*Hanc imitare, filia*"—Follow her example, my daughter.

Two points may be noted about this fresco. Mary is made more actual by being dressed in specifically Roman style: vividness is considered more important than authenticity. Secondly, she is important now not merely as the mother of Christ but also in her own right, by reason of her virtues. Devotion to Mary is growing and soon (by the fourth century) the name of Mary will be quite often given in baptism to Christian girls.

From the fourth century dates an important fresco in the Caemeterium Majus, showing a young woman, full-face, arms raised in the gesture of an orante, pearls at her ears, and round her neck a rich necklace of pearls and precious stones. In front of her is depicted a child—no longer a babe—head and shoulders only and also full-face. A monogram of Christ on either side indicates that the figures are Mary and her Son. With her bold eyes, strong nose, round chin, long thick eyebrows and heavy curls, this Mary suggests a full-blooded peasant from the southern Mediterranean. There is no third figure to indicate her importance: she dominates chiefly by her jewellery and by her size, almost filling the small tympanum which the fresco adorns. By representing Mary as an orante the artist evidently intended to emphasise her exceptional unity with God.

Mary appears in other frescoes of the catacombs, notably in scenes of the Last Supper and Adoration of the Magi. Her portrait is also found on gilt glass discs with the caption *Maria*. But the three frescoes considered above are her chief extant portraits. The features differ markedly in all three and there is no reason to think that any one was intended to be authentic. Even if a rough verbal tradition had existed, a human face, notoriously, cannot be put into words, let alone accurately reproduced on a rock surface, in small size, with only a dim light.

Certain conclusions can, nonetheless, be drawn. First of all, it cannot be too much emphasised that the decision to depict Mary as a woman was a crucial one, given the conservatism of religious art, and by no means inevitable. No less important for the subsequent history of art was her depiction as a *mere* woman,

undistinguished by nimbus or any other attribute of glory, and without the several heads and many arms whereby Indian art, for example, suggests more than human power. Then again, in all three pictures Mary is not alone but with her child. If her features are not particularly beautiful, she seems very much alive, vibrant with energy. There is as yet no attempt to make of her a figure of awe or splendour or ethereal grace. There is no dominant emotion, either of joy or sorrow. Just as the pigments, technique and composition are of the very simplest, so the grace of Mary of the Catacombs lies in her utter simplicity.

Primitive Christian art inevitably suggests comparison with primitive art in general, and I want to conclude this article by comparing these earliest pictures of Mary with one of the oldest pictures in existence of a pre-Christian woman. The famous White Lady of S.W. Africa,<sup>1</sup> like the Madonnas of the Catacombs, was painted on the wall of a rocky cave; it dates from several thousand years before Christ; and may be taken as typical of prehistoric man's highest aspirations. The White Lady, young, beautiful and supple, is seen striding forward in the chase; she is decked with bracelets and pearls; in one hand she clasps a flower; in the other a bow and arrow. Around her move other hunters and, especially, animals. Oryxes, springbuck, ostriches, giraffes, elephants and rhinoceros—all these, and more, are swayed by the young woman's power.

Behind the painting seems to lie the belief that somehow a woman of extreme physical grace will have power to protect mankind from what he fears and to procure what he needs: both fear and need centring in the flesh of wild animals. All this is still at a material level—both the woman's grace and the desired goal—at a level far below the artist's aesthetic vision; but there is nevertheless something very poignant about this groping towards a mystery still lying thousands of years in the future.

I need not stress the obvious contrasts with the Christian paintings—the shift to the spiritual, and from the general, the “dreamed of thing,” to the particular specific historic fact. I want, instead, to point out three perhaps rather obvious resemblances.

<sup>1</sup> In Leopard's Ravine, north of Windhoek. The painting is reproduced in the introduction to Abbé Breuil's *Four Hundred Centuries of Cave Art* (Montignac, Dordogne, 1952).

First, the presence, in the African painting, of other hunters, who imitate the White Lady. We find this imitative notion in the second of the portraits of Mary considered above. Then again, the White Lady is much larger than the other hunters. This recalls the point we made in regard to the first portrait of Mary: importance is shown by proportionately larger size. Thirdly, the pearls of the White Lady find their counterpart in the third portrait of Mary: and here we are in the presence of a basic need of human nature: the wish to see the beloved adorned.

On the other hand, the whole notion of a rather militant woman attacking and conquering her enemies is conspicuous by its absence not only from the catacombs but from nearly all Marian iconography. There are of course well-known exceptions —above one of the portals of Notre Dame Our Lady wields a sword in order to rescue Theophilus from the devil, and in Rubens' Virgin of the Apocalypse Mary is shown trampling the serpent underfoot. But these instances are uncommon, and if we take the White Lady as an archetype expressing man's expectations of an ideal protectress, this almost total absence of combativeness in paintings of Mary is surely quite remarkable. Indeed, if one had to characterise the *mood* of even so early a development as the Catacomb Marys, the appropriate adjective would surely be *peaceful*.

Another interesting point concerns the wild animals of the African rock painting. These vanish altogether in Marian art. (The unicorn I assume to be a mythological creature, and the serpent a metamorphosis of Satan.) Only one well-known example of Mary in relation to a wild animal comes to mind—Titian's picture of Mary with a Rabbit, in the Louvre—and there I believe the rabbit's whiteness has precise symbolic overtones. The reason for their absence is obvious. Wild animals suggest characteristics quite the antithesis of Mary's virtues. Even a cat, one feels, would be out of place in a painting of Mary. As for the ox and ass at the manger, these are appropriate because they suggest domestication—an upward movement—though it is true that Molanus, during the Counter-Reformation, did try to exclude the ox and ass from scenes of the Nativity because they are not actually mentioned in Scripture. Luckily on this point popular feeling triumphed.

To return to the catacomb portraits of Mary. Militancy and

wild animals have disappeared: the woman now is clothed and on her lap she holds a babe. The flesh of the lamb appears in other catacomb frescoes, and an actual sacrifice of flesh and blood will indeed take place. But mankind is no longer a hunter but a sower of grain; and so the sacrifice when it comes to be repeated in the Roman rock caves will consist not of the flesh of animals killed in the chase but of bread and wine.

Feeding on this new unbloody sacrifice man first learns gentleness and love. But the pictures on the rock wall also have their part to play in changing him. Without adopting the Byzantine theory that a picture in itself possesses a certain measure of its subject's "power," we can, I think, agree that by gazing on the catacomb paintings and on innumerable other representations of Mary down the centuries, man has learned a little to soften his hunter's heart.

For us, who look on them in the twentieth century, worn, faded and sometimes partly effaced, the catacomb Marys have acquired a quality which was altogether lacking when they sprang new from the hands of their artists: they have acquired mystery. This, it seems to me, adds greatly to their attraction. If all sacred art aspires to be dialogue, the catacomb paintings certainly succeed—but incidentally, because damp happens to have made them enigmatic, not through their artistic merits alone. We cannot look on them for long without wishing to complete them; whether we will or not find ourselves drawn into the heart of their subject. And so we can say that in this, her first humble rebirth in art, Mary has triumphed.

# ORIGEN

By  
HENRI CROUZEL

ATTENTION has recently been drawn to the influence of Origen on medieval spirituality and exegesis.<sup>1</sup> His homilies were widely read in the western monasteries, and their effect on contemporary writers, on St. Bernard, for example, is manifest. This fact had been almost entirely ignored by the historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; in the Alexandrian they saw only a speculative theologian, or even a philosopher who concealed a pagan outlook under a veneer of Christianity—opinions indeed still quite widespread in Protestant circles. It was, however, a Lutheran, W. Volker, who writing in 1931, first drew attention to the spiritual aspect of Origen's work.

One cannot read homilies and commentaries without becoming acutely aware of the spiritual feeling which informs them, and this, in the Middle Ages, was accessible in a particular way to monks and nuns, through their life of prayer and abnegation. The artificial character that some people attribute to "spiritual" or "allegorical" exegesis scarcely distracted them, attentive as they were, according to the Pauline precept, more to the spirit than to the letter. They knew that revelation is not primarily a mere text, but is the Incarnate Word, as a Person, His teaching and example, which the Holy Ghost explains interiorly to the Church, and in souls. For them the New Testament was already within this "tradition," in this climate of Faith which found expression in catechesis, prayer, liturgy and the organised Church even before it was written down. The Old Testament, read by Christ to His Church and by the Church to her children, became a New Testament; the water of the old covenant at Cana had been changed into the wine of the new. Origen's explanation of Scripture was based upon his spiritual insight as *ecclesiastikos*, as *man of the Church*. This is the reason the devout souls of the Middle Ages found in his work so much nourishment.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Leclercq, *L'amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu*, Paris, 1957; H. de Lubac, *Exégèse Médiévale: les quatre sens de l'Ecriture*, Paris, 1959, tome I, pp. 198–304.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. our judgment on R. P. C. Hanson's book, *Allegory and Event*, London, 1959, in the article "Origène devant l'incarnation et devant l'histoire," *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique*, Toulouse, 1960, pp. 81–110.

His thought is essentially scriptural and spiritual. From his childhood, according to Eusebius, his father Leonidas, an exceptional person both as a man and a Christian, had apprenticed him to the traditional culture of the Greeks and, at the same time, to the study of Holy Scripture. By the time he was seventeen his competence in profane learning enabled him, after the martyrdom of Leonidas and the confiscation of the family fortune, to provide for his mother and six younger brothers by giving lessons. Appointed official catechist of the Church at Alexandria, "he found teaching grammar incompatible with the exercise of religious asceticism and lost no time in breaking away from the grammar schools, which he considered unprofitable and in opposition to the sacred disciplines."

The young Origen stands out uncompromising in his zeal for the Kingdom of God; he is not of those who, having once put their hand to the plough, look back. He gave proof of this at the time of his father's martyrdom, and continued to give proof by a strictly ascetical life, and by the act prompted by his misinterpreting of Matt. xix. 12 in a literal sense. Later these excesses would be tempered by Christian prudence.

Soon the requirements of the apostolate were to make him return to the studies he had thought completed. It was the enquiries of men of learning, pagans or heretics, he had to answer. An immense profane as well as sacred erudition was to enable him to discover the "Will" of the Word of God, which was his essential purpose: he meant to use the "spoils of Egypt" to build the Tabernacle, the "divine philosophy" of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> So it was that the leader of the catechetical school could be seen, some years before Plotinus, attending regularly the lessons of the most famous philosopher of the period, Ammonius Saccas. Later, in his Didascaliaeum at Caesarea, according to the fervent panegyric delivered by a pupil who was destined to become one of the great apostles of the Near East, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, he taught all the Disciplines, recommended for reading philosophers of every school, with the exception of those who were atheist, insisting on an intellectual formation through dialectics and a moral formation through strict ascetical instruction, before proceeding to the study of Scripture.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the letter of Origen to Gregory the Thaumaturge in the *Philocalia*, XIII: in J. A. Robinson, *The Philocalia of Origen*, Cambridge, 1893, pp. 64-7.

Platonism provides both the framework of his spiritual doctrine, and the means of expressing the symbolism essential to all knowledge of God; but it is adapted by Origen to fit into a Christian system. To the transcendental world of ideas corresponds the world of "mysteries," the divine realities which will be contemplated by the blessed participating in the "eternal gospel." The "intelligible world" of Platonic ideas, or of the "reasons" of the Stoics (principles of perceptible creatures), is contained in the Son, created from all eternity by the Father in the generation of His Word. In the Word is contained the totality of mysteries: they are represented by the members of the Paschal Lamb, whether they concern God or the Word, the angelic beings, the heavens above, or even those "mysteries of the abyss" observed by Samuel. Mystery, the end of knowledge, is in the final analysis a Divine Person. It includes the Bread which the High Priest, the Son, partakes of alone in the Holy of Holies, the divine nature He receives from the Father, the darkness which veils God from the eyes of creatures; but also that food which the Word shares with men and angels, allowing them communion with His own being.

The visible world is a symbol of these supernatural realities; the same is true of Scripture, which is an incarnation of the Word, and especially, of the humanity of Our Lord, "the shadow of Christ the Lord under which we live among the nations."<sup>1</sup> But the nature of symbols requires that we go beyond them; like sign-posts they point to the mystery, by their own beauty they awaken in us the desire of it; but we must not stop short at the mere symbol itself.

A distinction, however, must here be made between the visible world or the Old Testament on the one hand, and, on the other, the New Testament and the humanity of Christ. In the first case, to stop short at the symbol, refusing to continue to what it symbolises, is the capital sin against truth, the sin of the idolater, of the Jew who sets up his law and cult as definitive realities, the sin of those who, in the passion of Christ, wished to destroy the truth and leave merely appearances. Their fault corresponds to that of the intemperate and the passion-seekers who look for, in creatures, the beatitude that is the gift of God alone. However, although one must go beyond the Gospel of

<sup>1</sup> According to *Lament.* IV, 20.

time to that of eternity, beyond the humanity of Christ to His divinity, in this case there is no fault in remaining, with simple faith, in the first stage; Christ the man, and the New Testament taken according to the letter offer means of salvation. Strictly speaking they are not to be transcended. The hypostatic union in which the Word is joined to His Body and Soul effects the union also of the two Gospels: the eternal Gospel, which is also the spiritual or intelligible Gospel, forms one *hypostasis*, a unique reality, with the temporal Gospel announced to the world in the "folly of preaching." They differ only through *epinoia*, the human way of considering things: as long as we remain in the state of knowing "through a glass, darkly," the only knowledge possible on earth, as long as we have not been granted the face-to-face knowledge of the blessed, the supernatural truths which patriarchs and prophets caught a glimpse of in hope, and which Christ brought to earth in their fullness, are indeed really within our reach, but covered by the veil of symbolism. This symbolism reveals the mysteries it contains in a degree corresponding to the stage we have reached in the ascent of the soul to God: the divinity becomes gradually more clear through the humanity of Christ, or the letter of the Scripture which is the other embodiment of the Word. In the contemplative and virtuous life allegorical exegesis becomes what dialectics were for Plato, the path which leads to the vision of true reality.

This progress is indicated by several images which set on foot a long tradition. There is the marriage of Christ and the soul, beginning in this life and reaching fulfilment after the resurrection of the body. The Alexandrian was the first to set this mystical exegesis side by side with the ecclesiastical interpretation of the spouse of the *Canticle* given in the New Testament and in the commentary of Hippolytus of Rome. Christ marries the Church by uniting himself to each of her souls; Origen passes without transition from the collective meaning to the individual in his explanation of the *Canticle*. A further image is the ascent of the Mountain. Every ascent described in Scripture has a moral and mystical signification, and every descent expresses a falling-off. Those who, through their virtue, like Peter and the Sons of Thunder, climb the Mountain of Wisdom, contemplate at the summit the glory of the Divinity through the transfigured humanity of Christ, and the letter of Scripture becomes trans-

parent. Finally there is the imagery of the birth and growth of Christ in the soul, a theme already developed by certain earlier Fathers. When the divine message is received by the catechumen, his soul conceives the Word, and at Baptism gives birth to it, as Mary gave birth to Jesus Christ. By the practice of virtue and meditation on the Bible the Word is nurtured, finds room to grow and produce fruit in the soul. The Word brings insight into the mysteries; without this the Incarnation would be valueless to us. After the Old Testament phase, and after that of the temporal Gospel, the *interiorisation* of Christ—"the imprint of the wounds produced in every soul that hears God's call, that is, Christ in each one, the expression of the Christ-Logos"—leads to "that Wisdom that is spoken of among the perfect," to Christ transfigured on the Mountain, the prelude to the beatific vision.<sup>1</sup>

Although it may contain certain speculative aspects, the "divine philosophy," the scope of which is outlined in the prologue to the *Commentary on the Canticle*, belongs to the sphere of mysticism, not speculation. Its whole system, its "logic" depends upon the understanding of Scripture as symbolical, as concealing the mysteries under its imagery. The first step in this philosophy is Ethics and deals with the asceticism essential to anyone who sets out in search of knowledge. For sin, and even simply sensuous attachments are obstacles in the way of knowledge; to the fallen angels, prisoners of their own malice, the order of salvation is unknown, while the prophet cannot be other than saintly. It is by the practice of virtue, purity of heart, humility, charity, that one climbs the Mountain. Expounded by Solomon in *Proverbs*, the ethical system becomes personified in Abraham with his heroic obedience. Next, "Physics" deals with the nature of creatures, showing how each must be used with due regard to the supernatural "reason" (the Stoic sense is maintained) in accord with which God created them; each proclaims itself an image and manifests the inadequacy of matter which represents merely a stage the seeker must go beyond. This is the lesson of *Ecclesiastes*, the moral to be learnt from the image of Isaac digging his wells, the Origenian symbol *par excellence* of knowledge, and searching among the hidden depths. The "divine philosophy"

<sup>1</sup> Con. Cels. VI 9: in H. Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum*, Cambridge, 1953, pp. 322-3. Origen freely adapts the text of the Letter VII of Plato (342 AB) invoked by Celsus.

concludes in the "Enoptic" or "Insight," the science of contemplation and love, of vision and desire, the object of which is God, His Word, the next world, the angelic hosts, all mysteries. Represented in the *Canticle of Canticles* by the Bride and Bridegroom, it is further personified by Jacob who "was named Israel because of his contemplation of the divine realities, for he beheld the tents of heaven, the house of God, the going and coming of angels, and ladders between heaven and earth."<sup>1</sup>

It is this ardent desire to see into mysteries, to know the Word in whom they are contained, and God of Whom the Word is the Image, that gives unity to the different facets of this man's personality, Origen, whom posterity (or possibly his own contemporaries)<sup>2</sup> also called "Adamantios," "the man of steel" or "of diamond." But this uncompromising person is also outstandingly affective, full of a tender love of Him whom he often calls "My Jesus."<sup>3</sup> His soul, pierced by the beauty of the Word as by an arrow, suffers from a sweet, incurable wound: this is in fact the first instance, supported by scriptural texts,<sup>4</sup> of that "transverboration" which St. Teresa of Jesus was to experience so forcibly. Here we must beware of an error which many historians have fallen into. The primacy of "knowledge"<sup>5</sup> over simple faith is not due to a certain esoteric tradition into which the perfect have become initiated. The object of knowledge is not of a different order from that of faith: faith is the necessary starting point of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. P. Lawson, *Origen: The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, Coll. *Ancient Christian Writers*, XXVI, Westminster (Maryland), 1957, pp. 39-46.

<sup>2</sup> This is what Eusebius seems to say: "Adamantios (for Origen bore also this name) . . ."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Fr. Bertrand: *Mystique de Jésus chez Origène*, Coll. *Théologie* 23, Paris, 1951.

<sup>4</sup> *Cant.* "I am love-sick, etc.", ii, 5; and *Is.* xl ix, 2: "He has chosen me out carefully as an arrow, hidden yet in His quiver."

<sup>5</sup> To designate the Origenian "knowledge" we have not employed the word "gnosis" which is the classic term in this context. Origen indeed uses "gnosis" but it is because this was the ordinary word for knowledge and is both scriptural and Pauline. Unlike Clement, however, Origen never uses the adjective *gnostikos* to refer to the "spiritual" or the "perfect," clearly intending to stand apart from the "so-called gnosticism" élite. This word "gnosticism" which the historians of religion use to designate a doctrine centred round knowledge characteristic of the "*spätantiker Geist*," esoteric and exclusive, especially when used in the context of Christian gnosticism, very often heretical, would give Origenian knowledge a doubtful colour, and make it liable to be confused with the heterodox gnosticisms which Origen fought against all his life. There is no reason why Origen should be separated from the Christian mystical tradition.

knowledge, as knowledge is the perfection of faith, providing as it does the evidence, as it were, of faith's affirmations. Mysteries, it is clear, must not be approached rashly. To embrace a mystery the soul must be attuned to it through personal progress. Otherwise the revelation would be ineffectual, or even do harm, like food that is too rich for a man fever-stricken. Would we not indeed be fortunate if such misunderstood instruction were not used to divide the Church, as the heretics have done? But knowledge is not confined to a closed élite. How often does not Origen exhort the Christians of Caesarea to but open themselves to it? If at times he appears to attribute to the spiritual or the perfect, as opposed to those who remain in simple faith, extraordinary privileges and charismata, it is because he is thinking of the ideal as it will be contemplated in the beatific vision, not of the incomplete realisations we admire in this life. He is very conscious of the abyss that separates the highest possible earthly knowledge, which is always "through a mirror, darkly," from that of the vision "face to face." Compared to that of the blessed, the knowledge of St. John the Baptist, or Paul, for example, which marks such heights in the story of human understanding, was but as the knowledge of children; the difference, one might even say, is like that between animals and rational man.

Knowledge, then, is evidence of the realities of faith. Its perfection is vision, or direct contact with the Word present in the soul, without intermediary, conceptual, imaginative or discursive. Here we enter upon the famous theme of the five spiritual senses, which has a long history, recurring notably in the Ignatian method of "application of the senses." This theme expresses strikingly the directness of the contact between subject and object, a contact much superior to that of the bodily senses. In this contact they become associated with the joy of knowledge, with the delight, the peace, the sweetness, the restfulness, the ardour which knowledge confers upon the soul, with the "enthusiasm" which it inspires, allowing the soul in some way to share the gift of prophecy; in a word, with the headiness of the wine that comes from the true vine. Like the organs of the bodily senses, those of the soul are informed by their object through a sort of connaturality, which is an expression of the charisma of wisdom. Like can be understood only by like; knowledge presupposes participation, and increases it. The soul can know the Divine Persons because it is made to

the image of the Word, which is the image of God's Image. The more conformed the soul is to the Divine Persons, the more it tends to a "resemblance" of them, the greater does its aptitude for knowledge grow: knowledge is proportionate to affiliation. Conversely, the mysteries, and the Son in Whom they are contained, are nourishment. Pasturage for the soul that is still in the animal state, milk for the soul in its childhood, vegetable nourishment for the infirm, the Word becomes for the soul that is strong and adult, solid food, the flesh of the Lamb, the Bread of Heaven. The Word becomes the substance of the soul by changing it into its own substance, into the divine nature which it receives from the Father through His eternal and continuous generation. The duality of subject and object implied by this direct vision is finally resolved. Through His Word God "intermingles" with the soul. The Father and the Son, although they know the sinner "with that knowledge common to all," although they love him with a love that wishes his salvation, do not "know" him truly, because they cannot unite, "mingle" with him; his sinfulness belongs to non-being, to that "nothingness" which according to John i. 3, was made without the Word;<sup>1</sup> it is beyond God's embrace. The most profound definition of knowledge is given by this expression of Genesis: "Adam knew Eve."<sup>2</sup> Represented by this act of human love it coincides with love in union.

In this there is no pantheism. Adam and Eve remained two in one flesh. The Word and the soul are two in one spirit. Their unity does not abolish their duality; for knowledge remains the meeting together of two liberties. From one point of view knowledge is grace. Platonists of every age have held that God can be seen only in God's light. This light, for Origen, is the gift of love given by a free person. A divine or angelic being can only be seen if it allows itself to be seen. The Father is the supreme preceptor; from Him comes all doctrine through the Son, who is the mediator, and in the Spirit, who is the *milieu* of vision. The human teacher, in the bosom of the church, leads his pupil to the divine Master, "to the source at which he himself has drunk," then

<sup>1</sup> Most of the early Fathers, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen separate verses 3 and 4 in this way: "It was through Him that all things came into being, and without him came nothing. What was made in Him was life . . ." Origen's interpretation is none the less strange. It comes from his conviction that scripture contains no unnecessary words; thus the second part of verse 3 should have a different meaning from the first part.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. iv. 1.

he stands aside. The part played by the Son is wholly interior: modelling the Christian on himself, to the extent of making him, like John, another Christ, the son of Mary, he gives him his "nous," his mentality, his vision of God and the world, he becomes in his soul the inexhaustible spring of living water, from which the Christian draws his understanding of the Scriptures. The Spirit, as He Who inspires the prophets, presides also over their exegesis, prompting the exegete with the true meaning. The theme of the light recapitulates these ideas. Its source is the Father; it is transmitted by the Son, the True Light, the Light of mankind, Light of the nations, Sun of Justice, He Whose name is Orient. It is reflected on the Church, the moon, on the saints, the stars, making of the contemplative a lamp, so that he must, like Moses, veil his face in order to speak with those who would be unable to bear its brightness. At the end of time, when Christ has set up His tent, the Church, in the Sun of Justice, all the saints will become, in Him, one single Sun. In opposition, Satan, the evil sun, has his mockery of light; he has his moon, the church of the evil, his stars, the hostile powers, he scatters around his false illuminations. In reality he is darkness, but darkness which is opposed to that "virtuous" darkness in which God hides Himself, and which is the expression of the divine mystery; that of Satan is the vicious darkness, the refusal of God, culpable ignorance, which persecutes the light.

The soul, then, has to accept God and His Word. The ecstasy produced by the wine of the true vine is not a sort of divine "possession": in it man transcends his humanity without going beyond his intelligence, that is, his "nous" or fine point of the soul. Far from dispelling the human *pneuma*, the touch of the Holy Spirit increases both consciousness and liberty in the prophet. It safeguards the basic possibility of falling in with God's good pleasure, of being open to illumination. Contrarily, the devil alienates and obscures the personality, as is to be seen in the possessed and in those governed by passions; such is Origen's golden rule for the "discernment of spirits." This refusal of "unconscious" ecstasy marks a reaction against certain mystificatory cults, and was to be ratified by the later tradition of the church.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Further support of the preceding pages is to be found in H. Crouzel, *Origène et la connaissance mystique*, coll. Museum Lessianum, Bruges-Paris, 1961. (In the press.)

In this rapid sketch we have fallen far short of a complete exposé of Origen's spiritual doctrine. It would be particularly incomplete if we were to omit to mention one of its most attractive features, its mystique of martyrdom. Origen was both the son of a martyr and the master of others, such as Plutarch whom he assisted in his agony, ignoring the reproaches shouted at him by the crowd who held him responsible for the martyr's death, and he himself confessed the faith, suffering imprisonment and torture in the persecution of Decius. Many homilies deal with this subject, and particularly the famous *Exhortation* which he addressed from Caesarea in Cappadocia to his friend Ambrose, who had been arrested at Caesarea in Palestine under Maximin the Thracian. No consideration, not even that of his family must deter the martyr from his confession, since this it is that identifies him with Christ in the most complete manner possible. Baptism of blood should be the Christian's fondest desire; it is much superior to the baptism of water, since it brings with it, in act and not through a sacramental sign, conformity with the death and resurrection of the Saviour, conformity that is perfect and not merely progressive. Like Christ, the martyr triumphs over sin and the powers of darkness, so that he has a redemptive value for the world. During the few years of peace and relative favour under Philip the Arabian, a brief respite before the first general persecution, that of Decius, certain sermons even reveal, one might say, a nostalgia for the days when the fervour of the Church was maintained by the blood of martyrs.

To his pupils Origen was more than a professor; he was, in addition, a spiritual director. The unbounded admiration of St. Gregory the Thaumaturge, the touching love which he compares to that of Jonathan for David, were inspired, not primarily by the pedagogue or the man of universal learning, but by the man of God; the *Panegyric* abounds in passages that testify to this. The master was at times severe, and the young Gregory confesses frankly that at the beginning he often felt tempted to run away. The "philosophy" expounded to him was that of self-knowledge, without which it is impossible to be dutiful towards God of the Universe. We must recognise the motives of our actions, avoid the cult of the body and the pursuit of exterior goods preached by Aristotle, and seek only what profits the soul. This self-knowledge is entirely religious; man

finds in himself a reflection of that divine intelligence which is an intimate part of his being, and by its light he is led to God. Origen did not give merely theoretical lessons on the virtues; he formed his pupils by his example, his exhortations and the standards he set. On the intellectual as well as on the moral plane it is formation he aims at much more than instruction, and in his instruction an important place is given to dialectical exercises, practised with socratic method. These in St. Gregory's exposé appear curiously mixed with the ascetical exercises, mortification of the passions, the eradication of false convictions, prejudices, insufficiently examined opinions, all that is dull or illegitimate in the soul, that it may be enabled to see truth in its fullness. He does not limit himself to the authors of any one school of philosophy, intending as he does to develop his pupil's critical faculty, to accustom him to distinguish for himself between the true and the false. At the same time he has an end in view that is more properly Christian. Attaching oneself to any one system would mean accepting it idolatrously, like the philosophers,<sup>1</sup> as the absolute truth. The Christian may only bow to the word of God, contained in Scripture, of which Origen is, in the eyes of Gregory, the divinely inspired interpreter. But the essential task of the Christian teacher is to awaken in his pupil's soul that desire of God by which he himself is consumed. "Like a spark struck alight in our inmost souls, the love of the most sacred, the most amiable Word which draws to itself all beings by its ineffable beauty, became flame in us, together with the love of this man, the friend and witness of the Word."<sup>2</sup> Mary visited Elizabeth that the Voice that would cry in the wilderness might receive from the Word, that John might receive the spirit of prophecy.<sup>3</sup> The "spiritual" according to Origen, for whom she is a particular model, transmits to others the Word and the Spirit, the light which he carries in him, the interior fire lit by Christ, the living water springing in his soul where God dwells.

A page of Eusebius, the influence of which can be seen on

<sup>1</sup> In his homilies Origen often levels this reproach at the philosophers. Heretics incur the same censures, for they set up their doctrinal idols on the mountain of the scriptures, like the golden calf in Bethel, the house of God. Cf. Origen's letter to Gregory, footnote <sup>2</sup> on p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> St. Gregory's *Prophetic and Panegyric discourse addressed to Origen* is edited in Vol. X of Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*: the two quotations given here can be found in columns 1076 B and 1072 B.

<sup>3</sup> *Commentary on John*, vi. 46.

early monasticism, describes the "philosophic life" that is the austere practice of poverty and corporal mortification to which the young teacher of Alexandria had recourse. His ascetic doctrine is diverse: unfortunately it remains almost entirely unexplored. It is centred, apparently, on the idea of the spiritual combat which was to be given so much emphasis by the early anchorites.<sup>1</sup> In this struggle it is the soul itself, the seat of free will and of the personality, that is at stake. Each camp has a foothold in it, for the soul is made up of two zones; the higher one, the realm of the contemplative and virtuous life, called the intelligence (*nous*), reason (*logos*) or hegemonic faculty (*hegemonikon*)—according to Rufinus and St. Jerome the "*principale cordis*" or "*principale animae*"—is opposed by another dark zone that is the ally of the flesh, the principle of passions, fantasies, instincts. Being created to the image of God the soul must become the bride of Christ, the adopted son of the Father; but it can elect to follow diabolical and bestial images, the adulterous love of Satan, and choose sonship of the evil father, the Devil. God has granted the soul an interior mentor, the spirit (*pneuma*) which shares in the divine Spirit, acts as the moral conscience, guides the soul to prayer, contemplation and the virtues, and is the first movement of every good act. It strives to rescue the soul from the influence of the flesh and turn it towards God. This does not mean that the body is evil. Created by God it contains, to use the language of the Stoics, the "seminal principle" or the "corporal form" of the Platonists, the grain destined to germinate the glorified body. For those who co-operate with the spirit it becomes the tabernacle of the Holy Ghost, the sanctuary of God, who is present therein by His image. In this case it can be seen by the "spiritual eyes," in transfiguration, almost as Christ was seen on the mountain. But sin has made the body a source of temptations. Every tangible thing is ambiguous, and fraught with danger; instead of directing the intelligence towards the mystery, its ideal, there is the danger that it may cause the intelligence to stop short in idolatrous worship of itself, so that the soul's *élan* is broken. Side by side with the spirit and the flesh numerous auxiliaries join in the struggle, guardian angels, good and evil angels appointed over virtues and vices, angels and demons in charge of nations, a whole invisible world,

<sup>1</sup> For example, in the life of St. Anthony by St. Athanasius.

drawn up as two armies in the soul, under their respective leaders, Christ, the Angel of the Great Council, and Satan, Prince of this world. But they cannot do more than incite to action; the soul alone has the power of decision.

Finally Origen is the first great exponent of the spirituality of virginity, the meaning of which he developed at length. The marriage of Christ and the Church, symbolised on earth by the marriage between a man and a woman, becomes concrete in the union of the Word and the soul, and made even more perfect by consecrated celibacy. Thus those who remain virgins are the first fruits of the Church; already close to heaven, they foretoken the unique and eternal marriage of the resurrection of the body. Virginity is a gift of God, the work of the Word—which is the sword that cuts off the passions—a charisma of the spirit, and can be preserved only through prayer. It is also a gift of man to God, a gift over and above that which is required; by mortification, purity of heart, custody of the senses, and avoidance of the occasion of sin, the soul, like the priest, offers to God in sacrifice the natural love it has for its body. Virginity, however, is valueless unless it is practised for God's sake only, with a pure faith, and unless it is accompanied by the other virtues. Chastity of the soul is both the source and the end for chastity of the body; by chastity the soul is freed from worldly anxieties and from the tumult of the flesh, in order to serve God. Like Esdras, whoever remains a virgin builds Jerusalem, the Church; the virgin, like Daniel, receives divine revelations, and like Mary, gives birth to Christ, for virginity is fertile. Against the Marcionists and Montanists Origen defended the sanctity of marriage as the image of a supernatural mystery. The love of husband for wife has as model the love of Christ for the Church. The fundamental virtue of this state is the agreement or harmony of the partners, which may be the sign of the Holy Ghost's presence. But the married person is inevitably the slave of his partner, while the one who remains a virgin serves God in complete freedom. Origen manifests a heavy pessimism in regard to conjugal relations, which is explained by his view of the ambiguity and danger of all things tangible. The couple may not habitually withhold themselves from one another; a rash desire for purity would make each responsible for the other's faults; besides it would be against right order to prefer this virtue to charity.

But the Holy Spirit does not preside over the sexual act; the married couple must temporarily abstain from it, by mutual agreement, whenever they wish to give themselves over to prayer, to receive the Eucharist, or practise the liturgical fasts. It brings with it in fact a certain blemish, which only affects the couple at the time of their relationship, as opposed to sin which endures. The impurity of the new-born child, shown from the necessity of Baptism, is linked with the carnal union of which it is the issue. This is why the soul of Christ, exempt from concupiscence by its union with the Word, could take a body only in the womb of a virgin. Ideas such as these still prevented some of the most highly-considered theologians in the Middle Ages from accepting the Immaculate Conception.

Today the abundance of Origenian studies has restored both the exegete and the spiritual writer, ill-understood by earlier generations, to his rightful place of honour. Desire of a theology more explicitly in contact with its scriptural sources and the interior life has doubtless been a contributory factor in this. Numerous translations of the Alexandrian's works have appeared in the most important modern languages. If the *Commentaries on St. John* and *St. Matthew*, and to a greater extent the *De Principiis* and the *Contra Celsum* are perhaps less accessible, on the other hand an informed public would find in the homilies and opuscules such as the treatise *On Prayer* and the *Exhortation to Martyrdom* excellent spiritual reading. Doubtless the allegorical exegesis may appear strange to our habits of thought, but if we try to understand we cannot fail to appreciate the wealth of deep experience expressed in Origen's symbolism. He scarcely ever speaks of himself, and personal confidences are rare. He explains simply what he believes to be the "will" of the Word of God, in all modesty, his aim being to make other souls disposed to hear it. The link that joins his interpretation to the letter is no artificial one; it is his personal consciousness of the operations of the Word and the Spirit together in his Christian soul.

## REVIEWS

### SCOTLAND AND THE CHURCH

*The Mirror and the Cross: Scotland and the Catholic Faith*, by George Scott-Moncrieff (Burns and Oates 18s).

THE QUATERCENTENARY of the Scottish Reformation provided a suitable occasion for historical stocktaking and reappraisal. In addition to a number of more specialised studies we have had Dr. Burleigh's new history of the Scottish Church, Dr. Donaldson's short and stimulating account from an Episcopalian viewpoint, and finally, at the end of the year, a Catholic survey from Mr. Scott-Moncrieff.

This is not a full-scale history like Dr. Burleigh's nor is it the work of a professional historian like Dr. Donaldson. A complete history of the Catholic Church in Scotland to replace the work of Bellesheim remains to be written and, in any case, is unlikely to be a practicable proposition for several years yet. Meantime, for authoritative studies of individual aspects and episodes of that history we may have recourse to the volumes of the *Innes Review*.

The author has contented himself with a more modest aim: "an effort to present in brief outline something of the historical background of his faith to the Scottish Catholic, and to the non-Catholic some idea of how we who are members of the Church see our country's story in relation to that faith."

Taking his title from two common Pictish symbols, he presents us with a roughly chronological gallery of key-figures in Scottish Catholic history. The line begins with Ninian, and the Celtic contribution is shown in Columba, Cuthbert and Magnus. The author is concerned to dispel the legend, still prevalent in Scotland, of a proto-presbyterian Celtic Church. With St. Margaret, Scotland comes at last fully into the comity of Europe and in succeeding centuries we have the great theologians, Richard of St. Victor and Duns Scotus, and the literary glories of the Scots Chaucerians.

For the early Reformation period, the author abandons the biographical method and Cardinal Beaton rates only a single paragraph, albeit a long one. However, with the advent of Mary Stuart, the author of *Fotheringay* is on his own ground and we have the fullest and most sympathetic study in the book.

There follows an almost equally full study of Blessed John Ogilvie and a briefer account of the other mission priests. Four more chapters bring the story almost up to date with the lean years of the eighteenth century preparing the way for Emancipation and a second great influx from Ireland leading to the Restoration of the Hierarchy.

With the approach of modern times the biographical method

becomes more difficult. The last character to receive anything like detailed treatment is the third Marquess of Bute. The only twentieth-century figure to merit more than passing mention is J. S. Phillimore, who died in 1926. Here the account is so telescoped as to be misleading: "tremendous good was done to the prestige of the Catholics who were beginning to be a force in University life in Glasgow by the accession to the staff there of a remarkable Englishman, John Swinnerton Phillimore."

When Phillimore succeeded Gilbert Murray at Glasgow he was not yet a Catholic and it is highly unlikely that he would have been appointed as a Catholic. We need only recall his friend Belloc's abortive application for the Chair of History at Glasgow. Indeed, even to-day, Catholic professors are rare in Scotland.

The author's tone is irenic throughout, although, not unnaturally, he can find little good to say of Knox. It is pleasant to find tribute paid to so many individual Presbyterians who are so often "better than their religion" and full credit given to such selfless souls as David Livingstone and Mary Slessor. The work as a whole is to be welcomed for its frankness and its charity and as a sincere and thoughtful contribution to the twin causes of historical truth and Christian Unity.

The book is well produced with nine well chosen photographs. There is a full (occasionally overfull) index. There are a few minor slips. It was Charles II, not his father, who brought the Royal Scots home. Author and indexer between them have contrived to divide John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, into two different characters and, possibly by way of compensation, have conflated the two James Beatons.

R. K. BROWNE

### FATIMA

*Our Lady of Fatima*, by John Beevers (Browne and Nolan 3s).

THE STORY OF FATIMA is so well known that we could hardly have thought another book about it was needed. We are at once confronted by the importance, especially in a very short account, of asserting nothing which is not quite certain, and omitting nothing substantial. Thus no one will suppose that Lucia told us a "deliberate lie" about the apparition of an angel three times between the spring and autumn of 1916, merely because she alluded to it for the first time in 1937; the very rhetorical and pietistic language she uses might well have been acquired after many years in a convent. (It is worth noting that editors, among them the author, have to correct her when she speaks of the angel mentioning the "infinite merits" of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary: Mr. Beevers follows Fr. da Fonseca in writing "the intercession" of the Immaculate Heart.) Nothing is said of the intriguing

story of the triple apparition in 1915 or 1916 of a "sheeted form" advancing and retiring, and this problem will probably never be solved. Lucia said that the promise of Russia's conversion was at first made absolutely, not conditionally (see p. 50), and made the obviously impossible request that its consecration should be made by the Pope and all the bishops of the world on the same day. It is clear that one can neither say that Lucia related her long-past experiences with verbal accuracy, nor that she just invented them. Mr. Beevers sets out very clearly the substantial message given by Our Lady at Fatima. But the more an account is meant for simple readers, and the shorter it is, the more should decorative words of doubtful value be avoided. For example, I believe the idea that the sun seemed to move in zigzags is mentioned only by a priest in India fourteen years later, describing what he saw when a boy of nine: and Mr. Beevers says the sun moved in "gigantic zigzags." It can no longer be said that Santos locked the children up in the common gaol, which was not at the moment in use. He locked them in a room across a corridor from his own. I find it strange that he does not allude to the one phenomenon which was photographed, a shower of "petals" or "snowflakes," which occurred 12 September 1917 and 13 May 1924. The photograph was taken by the Portuguese vice-consul in the U.S.A. and was countersigned by various witnesses, and stamped officially by a notary. Much about Fatima presents problems, and the greatest care should be taken about what is asserted.

C. C. MARTINDALE

#### MONTESQUIEU

*Montesquieu, Pioneer of the Sociology of Knowledge*, by W. Stark (Routledge 25s).

THIS BOOK is a sequel to Dr. Stark's *The Sociology of Knowledge*, and it is intended to serve as "a pattern on which parallel analyses of other classical authors could be built," to lead the way, that is, in charting the history of the sociology of knowledge. No one is likely to doubt the interest and importance of such an undertaking: the attempt to relate the genesis of ideas to the social situations in which they originate is itself given meaning and direction by its own history. And it is certain that Montesquieu is an exceptionally important figure in the history of that attempt. If, therefore, this book is not entirely satisfactory, this is not on account of its subject. Dr. Stark is, one knows, an erudite and conscientious scholar. But from these pages there seems to me to emerge comparatively little of interest either for the sociology of knowledge or for the study of Montesquieu. At most one can register that Montesquieu was concerned with the social

origin of ideas, and that he expressed himself in ways which can be classified in accordance with the types of sociological theory enumerated by Dr. Stark in his previous work.

It is perhaps inevitable that an attempt to interpret a classical author in the light of modern teaching should fail to be fully rewarding. That various passages in a classical *oeuvre* adumbrate different modern developments in sociological theory can be important only if such a fact materially enhances our knowledge and appreciation of the classical author in question or when it can be shown that he exercised direct influence on the formation of later theories. It is true that Montesquieu's influence was considerable and that his remarks on the social genesis of opinion are essential to an appreciation of his work. Dr. Stark certainly demonstrates their importance in his thought. But instead of investigating what were Montesquieu's premisses, what questions he was trying to answer and why, or alternatively of examining his influence on later sociological theorists, this book invites us to quarry Montesquieu in the light of modern theory without showing us how what we find illuminates either Montesquieu or the sociology of knowledge.

A great deal of Montesquieu's opinion on the social genesis of customs and ideas comes from earlier authors. There are still, surprisingly, notable borrowings from the scholastics, although these generally pass unnoticed and are anyway transposed in terms of enlightenment usage. There had been a firm body of teaching on the geographically determining factor in the origin of human ideas for almost two centuries before the appearance of *de l'Esprit des Lois*. It can even plausibly be argued that Montesquieu's comparatively developed empiricism marked a falling away from monogenetic theories of determination, since Montesquieu himself did not too clearly distinguish the ways in which religion, custom and law were interconnected in their influence on the genesis of ideas.

When for instance Montesquieu defines law in general as "human reason in so far as it rules all the peoples of the earth" and national laws as "the particular cases in which that human reason is applied," he is recalling the more common scholastic definition of law as an *ordinatio rationis*, but he is also reacting against theories of innate ideas, echoing Montaigne's distinction between "raison" and "raison humaine" and providing a rationalised concept to replace or explain the term "natural law." The number of the questions to which Montesquieu's definition gave rise itself arouses confusion about his meaning especially when, as Durkheim points out, Montesquieu proceeds to relate laws to the society of their origin rather than to the nature of man. It is precisely on account of the complexity and inadequacy of his synthesis that Montesquieu is of prime importance

in the evolution of the sociology of knowledge. But it is only by examining his relationship to past traditions, or to future ones, that this interest can be elucidated.

In spite of its careful analysis of Montesquieu's text and its highlighting of his sociological considerations this book remains, therefore, disappointing. It has its rewarding moments and is doubtless essential reading for the history of the sociology of knowledge. But it would have been possible to write a better book about Montesquieu.

ANTHONY LEVI

### GOOD MARGARET

*Margaret Roper, Eldest Daughter of St. Thomas More*, by E. E. Reynolds (Burns and Oates 16s).

**T**HIS EXCELLENT BIOGRAPHY is indeed something more than a pendant to the author's *St. Thomas More* (THE MONTH, March 1954) and possesses a real interest of its own. Margaret lives in the story of her father as a personality in her own right and is not completely overshadowed like her two sisters. Mr. Reynolds, as the acknowledged authority on her illustrious father and his circle, has now brought together in an attractive manner all that is known on the subject.

The most beloved eldest daughter who resembled Sir Thomas much more than the others in voice and manner, in mind and general character, stood in a special relation not only to him but to the whole Chelsea group. She translated the *Precatio Dominica* of Erasmus, and Vives paid her the high compliment of declaring that he looked upon her as a sister. All three girls earned the commendation of Erasmus and Pole for their Latin compositions, and once actually held a "disputation" in philosophy before the King. Margaret, however, did most to earn for the Chelsea household its double reputation as "a Platonic Academy" and a great school for the knowledge and practice of the Catholic Faith.

The substance of this biography consists in the full record of Margaret's visits to and colloquies with her father in the Tower. She took the Oath of Succession, not, as Rastell said, merely to gain access to him, but on her own judgment, having been greatly influenced by the course of action of all their friends and of Bishop Tunstall in particular. More's own testimony is clear; he told her once, but once only, that her action was grievous to him, but there was not for a moment any lessening of their mutual affection. In her passionate desire to save him she urged that by his "stiffness" he was losing not only all efforts at intercession but the actual regard of his friends, and there is a poignant interest, likewise, in her narrative of Alice Alington's

unsuccessful endeavours with Audley, Sir Thomas's successor in the Chancellorship.

The latter part of the book traces the fortunes, or misfortunes, of More's descendants and brings out clearly the unsleeping vindictiveness of Henry VIII. Margaret Roper and Margaret Clement were both watched for a long time, the one because she had rescued her father's severed head from being thrown into the river, the other because she had succoured the martyred Carthusians in Newgate. Giles Heron, Cecily More's husband, a harmless private person was actually attainted and suffered the penalty of "treason" in 1540. William Rastell twice went into exile. William Roper, Margaret's husband, managed to survive well into Elizabeth's reign, till 1578. He had trouble as a recusant; but he managed to assist with money the Louvain exiles in their dangerous printing enterprises and even to be a benefactor to Allen's famous College of Douay.

The book is handsomely produced with six plates and three illustrations in the text.

J. J. DWYER

## SHORTER NOTICES

*The History of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the Eighteenth Century: 1719–1798*, by W. J. Battersby (Waldegrave 18s).

*Brother Solomon: Martyr of the French Revolution*, by W. J. Battersby (Burns and Oates 30s).

BROTHER BATTERSBY has already done a great service not only to his own Institute, but to the whole Church. For not only has he increased the esteem in which the Brothers are rightly held—though perhaps many know little about them save that they teach, and are not priests, which doesn't get us far—but their history can encourage all Catholics who have watched, and are watching, the destruction of so much Catholic work that seemed so fine and promising. For the Brothers had hardly had time to consolidate themselves when the French Revolution apparently made an end of them. Such has been their revival and expansion since those tragic days, that we are almost tempted to approve the old *boutade* that any religious Order should be suppressed in its third generation and then brought to life again having had time to reconsider itself. Brother Battersby is indeed astonished by the fact that the Brothers apparently made no attempt to spread beyond France, save by creating a couple of houses in Italy. They did not even try to establish themselves in England when the émigrés were getting such a welcome, and even financial help there.

Can this possibly be because the Brothers of the earliest generations were deeply conscious of the enormous influence of French civilisation, and therefore of the importance of ensuring the Christian education of France herself? It may also be because they became aware of the development of a middle class which would need and deserve a solid education, devoid of the elegance of the classics, but highly developed in all that should serve the future of boys who were not poor, but not to be classed as aristocrats. Not that the Brothers were false to their idea of educating the poor. In fact, M. Arouet, who invented for himself the name of M. de Voltaire and liked to speak of the Brothers as *ignorantins*, was highly indignant that the common people should so much as learn to read and write. We confess that, till the last tragic episodes, much of the book is, and must be, full of small domestic details, foundations of new houses, revisions of systems of education, difficulties with Jansenist bishops and so forth—not “exciting.”

But the history of Nicolas LeClercq, Brother Solomon, born in 1745, supplies all the vivid colouring which some may feel somewhat dimmed in the previous book. This is the more striking because Brother Solomon, son of a respectable wine-merchant, became a very good, but not an outstanding member of the Institute. The author asks what would have been known of Brother Solomon had he not been martyred, and answers, “Nothing.” But that is what makes the assessing of the worth of society so difficult—indeed impossible. The diabolic atrocities of the French Revolution can be vividly described, as they are in this book; but how rare it is to learn of the splendours of individual heroism such as we here read of, and remember how many of Brother Solomon’s companions suffered what he did. And how ashamed we cannot help being when we become aware that political expediency hides from us almost all of both the savageries and the glory that co-exist with our own placid life.

*Private History*, by Derek Patmore (Cape 21s).

THE GREAT-GRANDSON of Coventry Patmore writes nostalgically in this book about the age of the Bright Young People of the 'twenties and the 'thirties, an age swept away by the horrors of the Second World War. Playwright, interior decorator, biographer and travel writer, Derek Patmore tells of life in London, New York, Paris, Greece and Roumania, and of his multitudinous host of friends, chief of whom was perhaps the beautiful Lady Lavery. H. G. Wells, Lady Cunard, Jean Cocteau, George II of the Hellenes, Lady Eleanor Smith and Lloyd Morris appear in vivid vignettes in these pages, and the reader is amazed at the author's adaptability to so many varying levels of society in different lands.

"Drenchingly lovely" was one of Cecil Beaton's phrases for some artistic "creations," and the drenchingly lovely and, perhaps, too self-conscious society, which is here so vividly and competently described, is now extinct as the Dodo. Mr. Patmore's tastes are catholic and baroque, and one is often reminded of his English Catholic forebears and of his Irish Protestant ones: his book is full of imaginative strength and ceaseless searching.

*St. Peter and the Popes*, by M. Winter (Darton, Longman and Todd 25s).

MR. WINTER'S BOOK is very welcome, even though it follows a well-trodden road. It is fully up-to-date, always courteous, and shows very clearly the trend towards recognising once more the Catholic interpretation of biblical and patristic *loci vexati*, e.g., the famous passages in St. Ignatius, St. Irenaeus or St. Cyprian's *De Unitate*. None the less, it is not denied that there was a real development in the early history of the papacy, in Newman's sense, not an evolution simply due to extraneous historical pressures, in Harnack's sense. There is an Excursus from pp. 99 to 112 about the burial of St. Peter in view of archaeology and liturgy, which, given its inevitable brevity, is perhaps the clearest we have read. The greatest obstacle to the serene progress of the authority of the Apostolic See was of course the Caesaro-papism of the eastern emperor. This was to be a real danger even in the West, when Charlemagne came to power; and again, when nationalist kings became absolute. But this book wisely ends with Leo I, when the position of the Pope was essentially clarified. That princes and prelates were constantly restive is not disguised, and the book is so fair that we can hardly imagine a new form of opposition to Rome arising in the future.

*No Little Thing*, by Elizabeth Ann Cooper (Hollis and Carter 15s).

WHAT FRANCIS THOMPSON said so dramatically in "The Hound of Heaven," Miss Cooper has tried to say in her first novel. To a very remarkable degree, she has succeeded. *No Little Thing*, winner of a 5,000 dollar Doubleday award for Catholic fiction in the United States, describes the eternal chase by God for a human soul. That the soul, in this instance, is that of a fallen priest adds poignancy to a tense and gripping struggle.

Fr. Michael Mundy had wanted to be a priest for as long as he could remember. His idealism, somewhat on the hard and brittle side, dictated that nothing should come between himself and God, certainly not the people whom he served: "He denied himself interest . . . in people for their own sakes, lest concern for the particle would draw

on the strength of his devotion to the whole." Was this an ideal or a defence? Was the handsome young priest's detachment from people really a contempt for them?

Laura, a young night-club entertainer whom Fr. Mundy saves from suicide, breaks through his defences. In a moment of stale disillusionment he violates his vow of chastity. Though his pride and spiritual resources withstand this failure even these are shattered when he learns that Laura is pregnant. Then begins an agonised search, really a flight, as Michael seeks for a love which, at last, he realises he never experienced at any level.

In a frightening episode set in the ghastly canyons of the Painted Desert in Mexico, Michael reels back from the precipice of final disaster. The key to his salvation is his growing feeling for Laura. Their love was a way back, a bridge for them both. Alone in the desert, torn by savage emotions and battered by the elements in a scene reminiscent of *Lear*, grace triumphs and Michael turns to Love in its true sense.

This bizarre climax is a bit overdone. But for the most part Miss Cooper tells a taut and exciting story. Her main characters are thoroughly credible and she handles her delicate theme with sensitivity and reverence. This is an unusually promising first novel.

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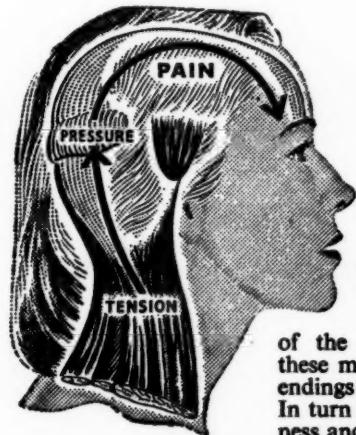
The Editor, THE MONTH,  
31 Farm Street, London, W.I.

**O**NE of the great occupational risks of business life under the pressure of to-day is that the practical man of affairs neglects his outside reading, and all too easily falls into a narrow circle of immediate preoccupations. There is always loss in this, and the Catholic business or professional man, as a member of the Church Universal, has a particularly strong reason for keeping his mind open to wider horizons. Certainly it was never more necessary than now to follow world happenings. A direct chain of causes and effects ties every business to economical changes in the world, which are themselves as often the consequence as the cause of changes in men's political and social ideas. These ideas in their turn come out of the religions, or irreligions, of contemporary man.

In many countries the Catholic Church is at the heart of the battle of ideas. Cardinal Manning's saying that "all great quarrels between men are at bottom theological" suggests that there is, in fact, no better starting-point or background for understanding the modern world than a Catholic one. Because of this approach and background

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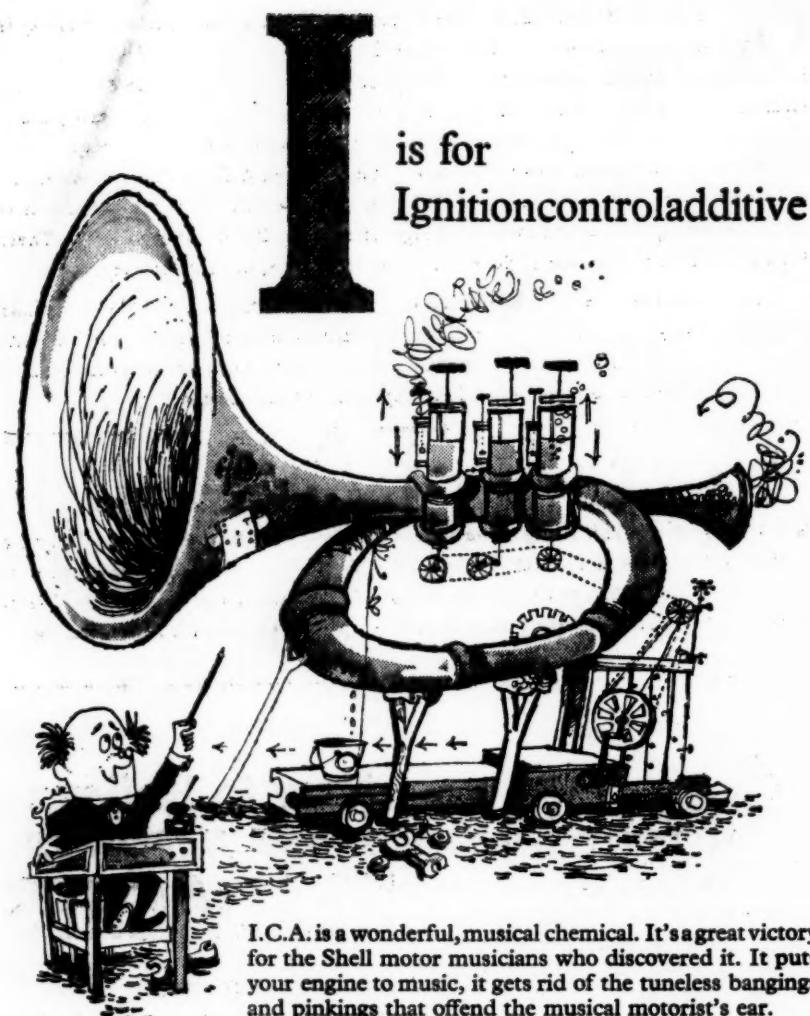
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